BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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Let's Play the Game, or, the Anglo-Saxon Sportsmanlike Spirit

A Boy's Control and Self-Expression

What Foods Feed Us?

How to Remember, without Memory Systems, or with them

Essays in the Making

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Eustace Miles' System of Physical Culture with Charts of Exercises

How to Prepare Essays

THE POWER OF CONCENTRATION

HOW TO ACQUIRE IT

BY

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THIS BOOK IS GRATEFULLY

DEDICATED TO

MY WIFE

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PREFACE

ONE of the main reasons which led me to write this book was that so many of my Health-pupils asked me how they could improve their powers of concentration and memory I then collected various notes on the subject, and had almost completed a book.

But, the more I studied the answers to one very important question that I asked them—namely, "What are your ambitions?"—the more I came to see that merely to concentrate was not enough Most of the pupils wanted to concentrate for the sake of financial or athletic or other ephemeral success, and seemed to regard such a success as a final goal

So I set about re-arranging the book, with a view to insisting that, before a person can concentrate with full advantage, or even with safety, he must get his ideals and his mental vision in perspective He must set "first" things first, and, however hard he works for his more immediate aims—*e g* the above, or for improved appearance, or popularity, or literary success—he must never lose sight of "first" things and never lose touch with them

It is nonsense to pretend that a man should never enter heartily into "second" and "third" things, that he should be always thinking consciously of "first" or spiritual things to the exclusion of things temporal. He should be thinking about things spiritual, rather, to the *inclusion* of things temporal

My point of view will be clearer from a comparison. A lawn-tennis player or golfer should bear in mind the destination of his stroke, as regards distance, etc, while he keeps his eye on the ball If he ceases to attend to the ball, he will play badly.

Recently it has been the fashion to urge all people, indiscriminately, to practise Concentration as if it were a virtue. It has been the fashion to hold up for imitation the so-called "successful" men, and especially the rich men It has been the fashion to extol Power—and Concentration as the chief means towards Power—and to depreciate those two other essentials, Foresight and Kindness. In a word, it has been the fashion to forget that first things should come first, and that Power is not the first thing, and that therefore Concentration is not the first thing

It is time that the dangers of Concentration on inferior objects were exposed The advantages of Concentration have already been set forth *ad nauseam*, so that each ignorant beginner in life is led to suppose that if he "concentrates" he will "succeed"

Concentration is not a virtue it is a force or a method.

In itself it is neutral, like energy

It becomes useful or harmful, like energy, according to the way in which, and the direction in which, it is applied.

This is true of water, of fire, of the magnifying glass, of system, of almost everything. They are precisely as mighty for evil as they are for good.

1. The first contention of this book, then, is that Concentration is not absolutely desirable when the aim and the way are not absolutely according to one's highest conscience.

2 It is only ideal Concentration that is absolutely desirable. It is the second contention of this book that ideal Concentration is of the following nature —

(i) It sets "first" things first and keeps them first, even while it attends to second and third things, it has the "first" things in view

(ii) In other words, besides the thing that is being done, the task in hand, it does not lose sight of the goal.

(iii.) Neither does it lose sight of the things that are above and below, and on either side of, and beyond, the thing that is being done. Just as the cricketer has to keep his eye on the ball, and yet to bear in mind the position of the fielders, so the ideal concentrator has to keep his eye on the

present task, and yet to bear in mind the things that are round about.

(iv.) Then, ideal Concentration is divertible at will. It is not the faculty of attending to one thing it is, equally, the faculty of attending to any other thing, as the highest conscience shall direct.

(v) It is also the faculty of not attending to other things, and of not attending to the thing itself at other times—of working with heart and soul in school, and of not playing in school and not working out of school.

(vi) It is without physical tension. During ideal Concentration of the mind, the muscles must be under control, for the sake of effectiveness, economy, and gracefulness

(vii) It is not against the true welfare of any individual or group

3. It is maintained that the faculty of Concentration is strengthened (whether for good or for evil depends, of course, on the direction in which the faculty is applied) by almost any sort of practice: for example, by Concentration while one eats or drinks, while one brushes one's hair, while one reads, and so forth

Indeed, the commonest acts of life are among the best of all training-grounds for Concentration, because they are the most frequent and the easiest to secure they are inevitable and innumerable! They involve very little effort.

4. It is maintained that the true physical parent

or grandparent of ideal Concentration is proper breathing and a relaxing of the muscles from all unnecessary effort This is against the popular notion of Concentration, which assumes that a man is not concentrating unless he is *showing* great effort and strain.

5 It is maintained that the true son and successor of ideal "Concentration" is delegation, together with occasional supervision, that, for example, a result of proper concentration on the technique of piano-playing is freedom to delegate the technique to one's sub-conscious mind or under-mind In other words, that Concentration is not an end, but only a means to an end—namely, liberty to attend more closely to the highest things in life, because the lower things are handed over to our servants within us

6. Individuality is to be respected. There is no one way, no one pace, for all alike. Some are suited by many short and sharp spells of practice and work, others by a few long stretches

7. Favourable conditions are to be depended on during the apprenticeship, and at intervals afterwards, when one can concentrate with skill and success He who depends on special conditions—who can only concentrate when there is no noise, when there is a certain temperature and weather, when there is a fascinating subject—this man is not master of true and ideal Concentration, which is an art independent of time, place, and circumstance, an accomplishment under control.

Such are the main thoughts in the book, which is intended not to lay down laws but to arouse thought. If it only leads people to reflect, before they begin to concentrate and devote their energies to a pursuit, as to whether the pursuit is the right one, and whether the way of Concentration is the right one, if it only leads people to get their perspective right before they begin the details of their pictures, it will have done what I wish it to do.

I have divided up the book into a large number of chapters or sections, and have made most of these short, with a special purpose I suggest that the reader may practise Concentration not only in other ways, but also while he is reading and after he has read this book I offer the following general plan, to be modified as the reader thinks best —

First, jot down notes as to your own ideas on the subject What do you think about Concentration? What do you wish to know about it?

Then, glance through the headings of the chapters or sections, so as to get a notion of the scheme of the book

Then, go through the book itself very quickly Afterwards, jot down the chief points that you remember

Next, go through the first section very quickly Afterwards, jot down the chief points Refer to the section again, and add to your notes any points that you missed

Next, before beginning the second section, go through the first section again, or at any rate recall its points. Then treat the second section as you treated the first

Next, before beginning the third section, go through the first two sections again, or recall their points. Then treat the third section as you treated the first two

The process seems tedious, and perhaps unnecessary. But it is practice in one of the most valuable aids to Concentration, which I have called, elsewhere, the "Part by Part" and "Résumée" System

During the practice, make memoranda as to points which you would add, or points which you would alter. I shall welcome these notes, if you will kindly send them to me.

CHANDOS STREET, W C

THE POWER OF CONCENTRATION

I

FIRST THINGS FIRST IDEALS

ONE of the most practical and successful business men in London, one who has worked his way up from small beginnings to great wealth, impresses me, whenever I meet him, with the idea that, with every attention to sound commercial principles, he has put "first" things first. He rarely talks about "first" things, in fact, he usually talks about "second" and "third" things, as most Englishmen do And he talks about these "second" and "third" things as wisely as the veriest money-grubber But he seems somehow to keep in his attention the right standpoint and ideal So that, when he is discussing even the most "economical" matters, he does not seem to be touching on anything "common or unclean" Indeed, all the time he is obviously "setting his affections on things above" without failing to notice carefully the things below, in front, and around

I do not wish to convey the notion that this man preaches, or poses as better than others, or is unctuous in other ways I daresay a great many who have had conversations with him have gone away without being conscious that he was different from them in his ideals For they know he is quite as successful as they are Probably they would describe him as a shrewd man of business. And so he is

But he has an eye on the great principles, the "eternal verities" He does not merely think of them for an hour or two on Sundays, and then shut them up in a drawer with his prayer-book and gloves He is guided by them constantly and sub-consciously.

Again, while he does his best to succeed in his city work, he does not appear to care very much for results, while he registers failures and tries to avoid their causes in the future, his chief aim seems to be not brilliant results at all costs, but brilliant results, if possible, and kindness and honour and good temper at all costs.

To me he is a living example of two-fold Concentration, a living proof that "first" things can be put first without the loss of attention to "second" and "third" things.

After seeing all the good that he has done (and is doing) without the least ostentation, but simply and naturally and as a matter of course, one is led to ask whether the other kind of concentration, on some sort of worldly success, regardless of the

New Testament Commandments, may not be so much to the bad, whether concentration may not be a dangerous accomplishment unless—to express it in popular language—the self is walking with God even while the eye is fixed on things temporal and "practical"

An instance like this friend of mine seems to me far more fitting than the instances of successful men usually quoted by writers And for this reason A close study of commercial ways in several businesses in at least two countries has convinced me that in no sphere of life can a more brutal, inhumane, cruel, selfish, soul-destroying personality be developed than in business, and I would prove this in many ways—especially by stating that in no sphere of life can a more brutal, inhumane, cruel, selfish, soul-destroyed *expression* be developed than in business To me the relentless commercial face is the most loathsome sight in the world—far more loathsome than the face of the drunkard or the sensualist For it is the terrible face of power and "wisdom" gone astray. And the more powerful and "wise" the face is, the more revolting it becomes

Many people of this type are received into society, and upheld as models of concentration and success for the instruction of the young If only we enlarged our idea of murder, and made it include death from starvation, death from despair and loss of faith in man, we should classify them among the worst set of torturers and murderers

We need, instead of such people, people with the true ideal, and especially people who keep and live by the true ideal in a career in which it is possible to sink to the depths of pitiless vileness If we are indeed, as Napoleon said, "a nation of shopkeepers," we want to keep before us the ideal "shopkeeper" We want to realise this man, of whom in our heart of hearts we must approve, as a moving and acting picture, and to shape our aims and decisions by his, and now and then to take stock of ourselves and alter ourselves in conformity with him.

To begin with, we must be convinced that this study of ideals is not waste of time, any more than is the work of the architect who plans, as distinct from the work of the builder

And I would recommend anyone who thinks that the builder is more "practical" than the architect, to go to a certain seaside place in Cornwall, and there pass judgment on the cheap rows of ugly houses that have wrecked the lovely prospects of the town These hideous blots were the fault not of the builder, but of the person who was called the architect. The latter had no real ideal in view. He simply planned "houses." Doubtless he attended to his work. Doubtless he displayed concentration of a sort But he had not in his mind's eye any ideal of a house Consequently, he went far to ruin the town

And the false aims which most people set before

them in life—their failure to form and remember ideals—have a similar effect upon their bodies and their personalities, and eventually their circumstances too, which are simply ruined, not for lack of physical food and exercise, but for lack of the ideal. For, as Ralph Waldo Trine says—

"The Law of Attraction works universally on every plane of action, and we attract whatever we desire or expect If we desire one thing and expect another, we become like houses divided against themselves, which are quickly brought to desolation Determine resolutely to expect only what you desire, then you will attract only what you wish for. . Carry any kind of thought you please about with you, and so long as you retain it, no matter how you roam over land or sea, you will unceasingly attract to yourself, knowingly or inadvertently, exactly and only what corresponds to your own dominant quality of thought Thoughts are our private property, and we can regulate them to suit our taste entirely by steadily recognising our ability so to do."

The Athenian citizens were more practical than most of us are They had before them, constantly, buildings and other works of art to keep them on the high level One of their great philosophers tells us that their married women used to look at beautiful statues, so that the children which were not yet born might be beautiful because of this concentration on ideals

We ought then, before and while we focus our

minds on "second" and "third" things, and on ways and means towards them, to refer again and again to ideals—all-round ideals.

We ought to set our hearts upon these, "with faith" and without hurry, in the spirit which an American writer, Floyd Wilson, advocates—

"If man recognises that he and Infinity are doing the thinking when right thoughts are sent forth, he may be valiant and claim them to be invincible, because, to those who estimate from the true basis of determinating pluralities, 'God and one make a majority' There is inspiration in holding the mind to a contemplation of the formidability of right thinking"

Our ideals must not be one-sided They must be symmetrical, balanced, poised, in perspective. We should spend a little time in realising what is meant by a symmetrical or balanced life

It includes physical excellence—health, fitness for ordinary physical work, trained senses, satisfactory appearance, a feeling of comfort and of energy, self-control, a bias towards kindness and helpfulness, intelligence and power of adaptation, economical sufficiency, social qualities, and a certainty of leaving the world better than we found it, so far as our own influence is concerned.

In a word, the all-round ideal is, as I have explained in *A Boy's Control and Self Expression*, physical (which involves the hygienic and æsthetic), moral and spiritual, intellectual, economic, social, and prospective

It is not ascetic We must not expect most people to concentrate their powers upon an ideal that is repulsive or dull For, as Haddock says—

"It is for the body to rest, as well as to toil

"And it is for mind to relax and change, as well as to concentrate

"And it is for the man to play, to rejoice with the hills, to throb with the sea, to laugh with Nature, as well as to struggle and pile up victories.

"But it is for the Will to slumber not, to relax never, to go forth day and night, in the full majesty of conquest"

The ideal is *Fitness* fitness for recreation and sleep, as well as for work and exercise and prayer. It is not merely activity It is capacity and faculty.

Having formulated the ideal, we must next realise it, as Haddock says, we must "select some desired goal in life, which we believe to be possible, and will, with all our might, that this shall be" We must not yet think of particular means. We must resolve that the means shall come inevitably.

At times—not too often—we must take stock of ourselves in comparison with this ideal, and re-adjust ourselves

We should set aside certain times for these studies and resolutions They need not be fixed times of the day They may be when we wake, when we wait, when we go out-of-doors, and so on,

But, unless we do recall the ideal, we cannot safely concentrate on "second" and "third" things. If we do recall it again and again, we can concentrate on them as safely as a first-class batsman in cricket can fix his eye on the ball without forgetting where the various fielders are placed.

Then, if we do recall it again and again, we can safely consider ways and means and other details. We shall not be in danger of following a surface- and sense-desire, as it were, instead of a soul-desire. This is the great danger of the person who concentrates without respect for an all-round ideal Haddock warns us against this mistake—

"Learn to emphasise in thought, and to see clearly, remote motives, contingencies, and consequences. Be sure that they are not overshadowed by those which are near Example I wish to economise in order to secure a home, but at present I desire a vacation. The home is very remote, while the period of rest is very near and clamorous In weighing motives, have a care that desire does not tip the scale In making an effort to fix our mind on a distant good or a remote evil we know that we are acting in the direction of our true happiness. Even when the representation of the immediate result is exerting all its force, and the representation of the distant one is faint and indistinct, we are vaguely aware that the strongest desire lies in this direction. And the resolute direction of attention in this quarter has for its object to secure the greatest good by an

adequate process of representation. Never lie to yourself in the consideration of motives and consequences. If you must lie, practise on other people, they will find you out, but if you continue to lie to yourself, you are a lost fool. Remember always that the lie is the dry-rot of the Will"

We can, then, without hesitation, take up any worldly concentration and seek any "second" or "third" thing without fear, provided that, before we pledge ourselves to it, we see our ideal in perspective, and are convinced of the vital importance of "first" things, and realise that we are building for eternal health and character, not for ephemeral money and success

What *are* "first" things?

Negatively, it is a "first" thing not to hurt anyone, including oneself, "by word or deed"—or by omission or thought, which are just as important as word and deed

Positively, it is a "first" thing to help everyone, including oneself, by such means

The "first" thing, therefore, is spiritual—which involves physical and intellectual as well as moral—excellence

The "second" things which are nearest to it, and indeed may be regarded as limbs or integral parts of it, are health, cleanliness, beauty, happiness, effectiveness, economy, and so forth

Without the "ideal," recalled and referred to again and again until it becomes our real guide,

as the architect's plan may be recalled and referred to again and again by the builder, until it becomes his real guide, concentration on worldly things is utterly unsafe With the ideal used thus, such concentration is comparatively safe, and is none the less practical and effective

To illustrate it, the Hindus tell the story of a seeker after truth, who went a long journey to a certain village to visit a famous Saint and Sage He arrived at the village, asked for the great man, and was directed to a tradesman's shop. The tradesman said that he himself had the name of the Sage, and told the newcomer to watch him if he liked. The newcomer watched the tradesman at his work, and then watched him attending to his parents at home, and the next morning watched him at his five minutes' devotion, which consisted of an absolute concentration on the idea of words like, "O God, my Master." Apart from these five minutes of intense dedication of self and his work, the tradesman seemed to concentrate not on "first" things, but on his daily duties

To the newcomer it seemed impossible that this worldly labourer could be a Sage and Saint, yet one may well doubt whether the popular Saint—a being who thinks and prays, but spends little time in menial tasks—is much nearer to the perfection of control than the busy man who keeps the ideal in his mind all through his day's tasks, although he has only given up five minutes to realising that ideal

The saying, "As a man thinketh in his *heart*, so is he," is correct, if we understand what is meant by the heart—namely, the very core of the being, not merely the intellectual and muscular activities This Hindu tradesman, thanks to the morning's complete surrender, thought wisdom and kindness in his *heart* throughout the day, however his mind and body were engaged He had the *habit* of concentrating on the tasks in hand and performing them with the maximum of skill and effectiveness, without letting them push away the guiding hand and altogether obscure the guiding light

The summary of this section is, that one should concentrate on the labour of the minute with the eye of the body and mind, and yet not lose sight of God and "first" things with the eye of the heart and spirit. The section does not urge on all people alike, indiscriminately, to abandon the life in cities, the business life, the journalistic life, the medical profession, the scholastic career, and so on, because so many have been rendered immoral, cowardly, and unspiritual by such lives It rather urges concentration on these lives, if they appeal to us, but such concentration as does not shut one out and switch one off from God and "first" things

If a commercial magnate or a music-hall artiste can keep in touch with God and "first" things even while he or she attends to the matter in hand and wins success, that may be a harder achievement than if he were in a monastery and she in a convent.

II

POPULAR FAULTS AND FALLACIES

ONE of the commonest of popular faults and fallacies is to regard concentration as good in itself, i e, as an absolute virtue, whatever be its direction and its nature Concentration is really not a virtue, but a force and a method. A man may concentrate his attention almost exclusively on money-making or athletics, or a woman on personal appearance or "social" success, and yet not be practising a virtue

It is especially not a virtue when people fail to set "first" things first, but set "second" or "third" things first. Most people concentrate narrowly on some narrow object, this is bad enough when the object is trivial, it is worse when the object is positively degrading and harmful, though perhaps even this concentration may develop and strengthen somewhat the general power of will It is, anyhow, far from true concentration, which always keeps objects in perspective

Most people have little sense of perspective, and little breadth and range of view, when they cross a road, for example, they look straight ahead and down, they do not look around them; and this is exactly their way in mental matters

Most people, also, have no power of diverting their attention, they can attend to certain things,

but they cannot in a moment, if it is advisable, attend to certain other things, when the conscience dictates.

And remarkably few people have the power of inattention, the power of not attending to a thing at all, when the conscience dictates. Most of the mistakes we make are due to attention to the wrong objects, we ought to have the power to turn our minds away from these objects.

Another serious error is to imagine that concentration is simply a mental process, and that physical helps are to be despised. Physical helps are invaluable, especially during the early stages of practice Leisurely breathing is one of the best physical helps, though it may be the result of a right mental attitude, yet it will also help a right mental attitude

It is especially these purely "mental" people who think that the art of concentration is to be acquired only by unpleasantly hard and long stretches of practice at big intellectual or spiritual tasks, they too often neglect the easier practice in the daily things of ordinary life, which are the finest training ground of all These people also, as a rule, show physical tension almost as if they were working with spring-grip dumb-bells, their eyes, face and hands are distorted This is a mistake, it is a violation of the law of economy and æsthetics

But a scarcely less common fallacy, also seen in ignorant systems of "Physical Culture," is that,

concentration on certain elementary things will always be necessary. One of the leading exponents tells his pupils to concentiate on the simplest exercises, day after day, year after year, even when these movements have become easy and practically automatic

The sensible man concentrates on certain things in order that he may not have to concentrate on these things later on, that is, he means to form a habit, and then to delegate the attention to his under-mind

A great deal of the difficulty of people who start concentration in a haphazard way is that they try to focus their minds on the whole object, rather than upon each part in turn I remember how, for years, I tried to write essays in a single process. I simply wrote them, and the result was failure every time The failure was not through want of concentration Then in essays, as in games, I analysed the whole into parts, and concentrated on each part in turn—for instance, on the collection of ideas, their arrangement, their connections, and so on. Almost all my concentration on essay-writing as a whole, had been futile, besides, it had been uneconomical, it was like exercising every muscle of the body daily in the case of those who only need to exercise certain weak muscles. Part of the very essence of concentration and success is to apply it to the weak spots *par excellence.*

There are many who do not need to practise at all, they have scarcely any weak spots, it is

ridiculous to urge these to concentrate, they concentrate well already, just as some already, without conscious thought, play the piano well, or play games well, or make good speeches

Equally absurd is the plan of advising, for everybody alike, only one beginning of the art, only one way, and only one end There must be allowance made for individuality. That is a perpetual rule

And there must be no hurry Most people hurry, they demand to be conscious of results almost at once, they judge their practice by immediate effects This is premature It may take a year or two years before one gets any notion of the benefit of right practice For example, in essay-writing it took me many years before I realised the greatest benefits of that method of dividing up the whole into parts, and concentrating on each part in turn The benefits are not to be demanded at once, they are to be waited for quietly, as we wait for seeds to develop into plants.

III

WHAT CONCENTRATION IS AND WHAT IT IS NOT

A WELL-KNOWN writer has said that "attention or concentration is the effort of the mind to detain an idea or perception, and to exclude the other objects that solicit its notice"

This is a mistake Concentration is not necessarily effort, after practice it should cease to be effort, and should become a natural tendency or bias

Professor James is more accurate when he says that "the essential achievement of the will, when it is most voluntary, is to attend to a difficult object, and to hold it fast before the mind," but he also errs when he says that "effort of attention is the essential phenomenon of the will" Obviously, as with the will, so with muscles, the stronger and more skilful it is, the smaller effort it needs for a given task The man who wishes for concentration must, therefore, not emphasise the idea of effort, but must rather emphasise the idea of a mighty will, successful rather than striving

Concentration is, as I have said already, a neutral thing, like the Prâna of the Hindus It is a power, it may almost be said to be power itself In itself it is no more good nor bad than the power of a nail and hammer, all depends upon the direction and use We must judge it by its fruits Concentration is as bad as it is good, it is as effective with bad aims as it is with good aims, except in so far as we believe that all things work together for good Possibly, when applied to bad ends with good methods it is more dangerous and fatal than when applied to bad ends with bad methods!

So much for concentration in general

Ideal concentration is very far from the usual

definition of it A popular teacher defines it by means of a pointed instrument; he says that the whole attention is fixed on one point, and this definition is according to the derivation of the word from the Greek *kentron*, a spear or point, and the Latin "centrum," which also has the meaning of our word centre Ideal concentration is nothing so narrow as this; it is a far more complex affair, it requires at least two points of view. Instead of being a stationary point, it is a moving point, constantly adapting itself to new conditions and also connected with a higher point It may rather be compared with the new Monorail, working on the principles of the spinning-top, it moves along and adjusts its balance continually.

Ideal concentration sets "first" things first, and keeps other things in perspective, and concentrates on them in turn, in proportion to their importance

Ideal concentration includes the power of diversion from any given object, and the power of inattention to any given object

It includes economy also, which is effected not only by a sheer focussing of the mind upon one thing and one thing only, but also, as we shall see, by orderliness and system Without them, ideal concentration is impossible.

Ideal concentration is not against the true interests of any person, it is for the interests of many if not of all people; it is for the all-round good of oneself and everyone.

Ideal concentration is not an end in itself, it

is a means to an end Ideal concentration on any given object has, among its aims, freedom from the need to concentrate on that object

So much for the nature of concentration

As to the ways, they must be individual, each person must have his own beginnings, his own paths and times, his own ends, even while there must be one great end common to all individuals, namely, the best possible condition of the greatest possible number of people

IV

SUPPLEMENTARY PRINCIPLES

WE have just seen that ideal concentration is not merely to focus the attention on one small point Ideal concentration involves this to some extent, but also involves certain principles, usually supposed to have no connection with concentration, and even to be opposed to it

Among the foremost of these principles is perspective As I said above, before he begins to concentrate, a man must put "first" things first, and keep them there His aim must be, not one narrow success, but rather symmetry—symmetrical fitness. He must, that is to say, have two sights at the same time, the first, none the less real because it may be sub-conscious, is the sight of the end or goal, the second, which is

often thought to be the only one, is the sight of the particular object at the time Julius Cæsar is a good example of concentration on many objects, each in turn, and, at first, one would call him a symmetrical man —soldier and general, athlete, statesman and orator, historian, philosopher, and so on, it seems as if he must be a balanced man But, in spite of the apparent symmetry, there was a want of perspective, he did not set "first" things first

He had, however, the second supplementary principle, which was that of diversion He could transfer his attention from one thing to another with the greatest rapidity For instance, he could transfer his attention to recreation

Another principle, besides perspective and diversion of attention, is abstinence A man must be able to not-attend, and especially to not-attend to undesirable things If a man had mastered the power of inattention, he need no longer be the slave of any passion Slavery to passion or the passions is partly due to the absence of this power of inattention

Closely akin to it is the power of diffused attention For example, the artist has to be able to see a whole landscape with a bird's-eye view, a spectator has to be able to see a whole picture or piece of scenery similarly This diffusion of attention is in every way as important as concentration of attention The eye must be able to relax, as well as to contract its muscles On somewhat the

same principle, it is not well that water should always be concentrated in a narrow channel or pipe, although this gives it greater force, the shallower water spread out over a large surface has its uses also

A still more important supplementary principle is that of delegation When, thanks to concentration, you can do a thing easily and half automatically, then is the time to delegate it, except under the following conditions —

First of all, there is need of occasional supervision. I know the manager of a business, who, at first, did everything for himself, now he leaves nearly all the work, except the supreme control, to his subordinates He *can* do all the work himself, but he does not do it, he finds occasional supervision quite sufficient

He also, now and then, does some detailed work, rather for the sake of change and relief, and to divert his mind. I know one man who, when he is worried, goes and brushes his hair, or sponges his face, or recites to himself some poetry that he has learnt This is not for the sake of practice and perfection in these arts, but for the sake of relief and distraction, and inattention to the subjects that worry

For most people there is need of yet another principle, and that is planning and preparation Merely to concentrate is not enough, one must choose one's subject, and one's ways, and one's order of procedure.

Another supplementary principle is unobtrusiveness The practices must not be objectionable to those with whom one lives

When these supplementary principles are observed, I think that the ordinary kind of concentration can be practised in safety As Mr Alfred Faulding once remarked, there is very little danger, provided that the motive is sound That is the first essential, then, if one observes these other principles, "common or garden" concentration is unlikely to have any disadvantages at all

V

EXAMPLES, COMPARISONS, AND CONTRASTS

PERSONALITIES and pictures appeal when abstract principles pass out of the mind without effect For example, R J. Campbell's *New Theology* was read with excitement, and was a means of influencing many who were unmoved by similar ideas set forth in the less concrete Hindu religion. Similarly, it is often well to begin with the study of individuals and their practices, and with all sorts of local colouring and detail which may be forgotten when the lessons have been learnt

One of the most useful books that I know is *Earnest Men*, published by Nelson & Sons It illustrates from biographies of well-known men

the effects of concentration along various lines—missionary work, philanthropy, patriotism, science and art Among the men are Granville Sharp, Dante, Daniel Webster, Michael Angelo, John Kepler, and James Watt.

But perhaps the most striking examples are those of Columba of Iona and William Carey.

Columba "gave himself wholly" to his missionary work, and transcribed more than three hundred books with his own hand He concentrated his *mind not on man's applause*, but *on* "God's approving smile,", the result was an invincible resolution carried out calmly and practically

Carey had the same aim and the same power of concentration on the highest things, together with attention to the things of action and progress With a view to "converting the heathen," he mastered one language after another—Latin, Hebrew, Greek, Dutch, etc.—so that he might translate the Bible He printed the translations He was opposed by ridicule and open hostility, and hindered by illness and poverty and the burning of his printing-press. But he never turned back, and never "dreamed" One of the most typical stories told of him is that, when he was a cobbler, he would let his eyes wander now and again to a map of the world before him, on which he had made notes about the various peoples, but he would not stop working at his trade

Hundreds of other examples can give us useful

lessons, though most of the celebrated examples give us lessons as to concentration itself, rather than as to ideal concentration—*i e.*, concentration on first things, without neglect of second and third things. We can study Bruce, Rockefeller, Flanagan the hammer-thrower and other specialising athletes, or the more versatile Benjamin Franklin

Or we can study children, and "become like little children" not only in their faith, but also in their faculty of attending to the matter in hand, and then diverting their mind rapidly to some different matter.

Turning from people to things, we find splendid instances of concentration, at least of the narrow sort, in the magnifying glass which will concentrate the rays of the sun, in the sun itself, which is concentrated heat, in the earth, which is concentrated matter, in the trees, which are prevented by their bark from expanding too widely, and so are forced upwards, by man, who is concentrated matter and consciousness, by man's organs, each of which attends to its special work, by the nail whose concentrated point penetrates where the thicker part will not penetrate, by the hammer which concentrates force upon a narrow object, by the wedge, or the wedge-shaped formation of troops in battle, and by a thousand other comparisons

Then there is the water, which has little power (except to irrigate the land) when spread out, but

when narrowed, can move a ship with it, or turn a mill-wheel, or (through a pipe and spout) disperse a crowd! There is gunpowder, a force that needs compression There is the lens, which focusses the "attention" of the camera in any given direction There is the search-light, with a similar function

The true nature of ideal concentration is not made clear by these examples They only show facets of the whole art Especially, they leave out of sight the double concentration—both on "first" things and on "second" and "third" things—which is almost essential to practical success along the right lines But at least they make the narrow kind of concentration — that on "second" and "third" things—more of a living art to us

And we realise the nature of concentration still more thoroughly if we study contrasts with the above comparisons for instance, if we consider the labour or damage which results when a nail has no point, or when instead of a hammer there is only a stick.

We can also study cases in which true concentration is absent, as when the city clerk attends to many other things besides his business during business hours, or when he devotes himself to one wrong object, being able to focus his mind only on that which attracts him for the moment; or when his master attends to petty details which he should delegate to this clerk, and concentrates

his valuable attention on trivialities and details, instead of on the general management

In fact, we might go through the sections on, "What Concentration Is" and on "Ideals," and work out, point by point, the opposites of the Ideal, so that we may avoid such mistakes ourselves

The study, however, will be of little use unless we follow it up by a resolve—namely, that we will certainly apply the best lessons which we can gather from what we read

For mere reading is, of itself, useless or worse than useless We must read with concentration, and follow our reading by resolves, and follow our resolves by persistent actions

VI

LESSONS FROM GAMES

WE seldom find anywhere such concentration as we find in England on the playing of games. It is a pity that there is not more concentration on practice for games, because, if there were, games would bring with them far more enjoyment and profit Still, even as they are, they have for us some useful teaching

One of the reasons, and, in fact, the chief reason, for the concentration they get is the interest which people take in them Boys will

not devote to their dull work a fraction of the attention they devote to their attractive games, the interest helps to make the concentration easy.

There is another merit in games, they bring with them many blessings and benefits which are not consciously sought for, and which are not given by the dull grind of so-called education. So with concentration, we can acquire it and its merits without specially seeking it and them.

The successful player in many games keeps his eye on the ball. This is noticeably the case in cricket and golf But he also keeps part of his eye, as it were, in cricket, on the bowler's wrist and arm, and on the fielders, that is to say, while he concentrates, in the narrower sense of the word, he does not lose sight of the surroundings, and that is where so many of those fail, who concentrate in the narrow sense of the word · they keep their eye only on the ball, so to speak

The successful player must stand right, before he can do his stroke justice, he must have his feet in a good position. This is pre-eminently the case in golf. In this game the player has plenty of time to get into position In other games, such as lawn-tennis, he has not, he must adapt himself quickly. So in ideal concentration one must stand in the right position, facing in the right direction. Sometimes one has leisure to form this position in advance, sometimes one is compelled to form it at a moment's notice.

Those who have not been born players, but

have made themselves players, have for the most part practised the mechanism of the game, corresponding to the technique of piano-playing They have practised it long before the game, long before the need for its use, arose If they have had great difficulty, very likely they have practised the individual parts of the stroke, each by itself, till it became correct And they have begun very slowly First of all, they have analysed the strokes to find out what the parts are, and perhaps they have, in the early practice, kept their eyes on the limb that they were training

Concentration can get a lesson from these methods A man can analyse a thing on which he wishes to concentrate, and practise it part by part, each part at first slowly and with attention, later on, the player and he who concentrates can leave each part to work by itself, turning the attention to larger matters of management, etc

For it is the very essence of success to leave the correct mechanism alone, not to concentrate on it, except, as I said before, for occasional supervision, and in order to divert the mind. The genius, who concentrates on the thing which naturally he does well, is quite likely to spoil his skill The mathematical genius, who could calculate rapidly and accurately by the light of Nature, lost this power when misguided people tried to teach him the elements of arithmetic!

The best players do not play with their whole

body, when only a part of the body is required. Mr C B Fry has recognised this as an important factor in play There must be repose of the parts that are not wanted So he who concentrates should learn not to use any muscles or any thoughts unnecessarily, he must economise

One of the secrets of the tremendous power that some players have—for example, R. H Spooner at cricket, H L Doherty at lawn-tennis, and most good players at golf—is not only this looseness of the muscles which are not wanted, but also a similar looseness of the muscles that are wanted, until the very moment when they are wanted, then there comes an extra grip and force, which makes just the difference. The teaching of the "spring-grip dumb-bells" is mistaken in this respect, it has spoilt many people for success in games, it has taught them to keep the grip and strain the whole time In play, as in concentration, and in singing also, the full force is required not all the time but only at the right moment

After play, the attention should be diverted, except for the occasional correction of thoughts The man who thinks of games and of nothing else, whether he is playing or not, is not a true player The man who concentrates on "second" and "third" things, who thinks of these things out of their proper hours, has not the true art of concentration.

The times of practice are an exception During these there must be concentration, whatever the

subject may be, yet both before and after the practice, the practice and the thing for which it is practice, whether this be a game or something else, must be put in perspective

It is well in games to realise their many advantages—the training of the body and the senses, the training of the mind, the training of the social faculties, and so on. This helps us to play in the right spirit, and with none the less pleasure So, before we concentrate on our special aims, we ought to consider their advantages.

There are a few people who need scarcely any play, and there may be some who need no play at all—probably because their work is also their play, they enjoy it, and play it with the right mind. So some need little or no practice in concentration, already they concentrate naturally. It is a pity for these people to go in for elaborate practices, and especially for arduous practice, such as are recommended indiscriminately in too many books. For these people, exceptions as they are, have a natural genius, and a natural genius need not be taught the mechanisms, he has them already, inherited from his ancestors or his former self.

VII

LESSONS FROM DRAWINGS AND PAINTINGS

IT is a pity that we are not taught early in life how to see, whether it be to see models, or pictures, or natural scenery, or faces or anything else If we were taught how to see with our physical eyes, we should get an invaluable lesson for concentration

We should not look at things with physical tension, frowning eyes, corrugated forehead, gripped hands, and so on. This is quite unnecessary, and actually a hindrance The mind cannot work properly if the person is in the wrong position and condition This applies equally to listening to music, one of the chief reasons why people are so tired after seeing or hearing is that they have kept their bodies strained It has not been the seeing or hearing that has tired them, as Miss A P Call says, but the needless and ugly habit of grip. It is the same with concentration. The highest concentration involves being able to do almost entirely without physical tension

At first the seer should not study details A detail, such as a figure in a picture, may be the primary attraction, without which he would not notice the picture at all, but, if he would see the picture fairly, he must see it as a whole, he must get a general impression of it by standing at a

distance, or else half closing the eyes, which the French call *cligner les yeux*, so as to get the idea in outline and perspective It is good practice for him to try to reproduce this general impression in his mind's eye, or on paper, before he proceeds to details.

Next come the details, which he may consider each by itself, yet with frequent reference to the whole picture Here, also, he may reproduce mentally, or on paper

Then he should look at the whole again, seeing the picture as a whole, and also seeing its parts or details better than before

The reproduction in the memory should follow as soon as possible after the actual sight, and should then be corrected from the original

After he can see stationary pictures in this way, he can practise with moving pictures, this is far harder. It is not so hard to get an impression of some one figure in the street, but it is hard to combine the two—to get the general impression of the whole scene and a good idea of the many figures themselves. Nothing is more awful than the usual painting of a family-group, in which there is no whole scene at all, but rather a series of individual pictures put together upon a single canvas This is not art

True concentration must be like true and scientific seeing It must see the whole as a whole, then each detail by itself, then the whole as a whole yet as a collection of details also

VIII

STOCK-TAKING AND OTHER LESSONS FROM BUSINESS

THE tendency of the future will be to draw lessons from the highly organised for the better conduct of the less highly organised, the latter will lose nothing in enjoyment, but will gain a great deal in efficiency. The tendency of the future will be to draw lessons from what is well done in a narrow sphere to what is badly done, and especially to what is badly done in the wide sphere—the sphere of mind.

In America, when a business is failing and the manager is at a loss, the business-doctor is called in. Probably he first takes stock and analyses; then, having examined the business part by part, he says to the manager "This part must be altered, that part must be cut off altogether, another part must be developed to the full on such and such lines," and so on.

No one calls this morbid. If a man enters thoroughly into the affair and takes most careful stock, he is recognised as the sensible man. It is strange that when anyone attempts a similar plan with his body or his mind, which are far more important than his business, he is called a crank, unless he works along strictly orthodox, which are usually unsuccessful, lines.

The best managers of businesses can themselves perform each part of the business consciously They train each member to perform his proper function They prefer, afterwards, to delegate the details to these members, and themselves direct the whole, only occasionally supervising the details So it should be with concentration—there should be training of oneself in each part of one's work, so that the conscious self can perform this part well, then a delegation of the work to the special under-mind which regulates it, so that the conscious self may be devoted to the most important matters of management—or may play or rest.

Another secret of success in business is co-operation. What one person fails to do or cannot afford to do by himself, several persons can succeed in doing and can afford to do Moreover, by co-operation, each is teaching the other something—each is learning from the other The principle of co-operation is regularly employed in business; its possibilities have scarcely begun to be recognised in other spheres, such as religion and education. There is already some co-operation, inasmuch as the people do work together, but in true co-operation there is far more independence of each part, each part contributes not only routine-work along fixed lines, but intelligent and original suggestion of improved lines. So people should compare notes in their practice of concentration, and should give and take hints

The best plan would be for a number of men engaged in a number of different pursuits to collect together the principles of success in their pursuits, and then meet and discuss these principles, and apply them to other departments of life

For concentration will not succeed without businesslike method Method cannot be learnt without the help of others; life is too short for each to learn the whole for himself, without co-operation.

IX

HOW THE HINDUS TRAIN FOR CONCENTRATION

A WELL-KNOWN writer on the Hindu system of Râja Yoga, Vivekânanda, tells us that the best Hindus teach their children two things: first, the Fatherhood of God and the oneness of all living creatures, second, the right way of breathing—namely, fully and rhythmically, through the nostrils.[1] The first thing—the interdependence of the various members of the human race—is set first And by the best Hindus it is kept first, even in the midst of concentration on the daily work—silver-work, learned work, or whatever else it may be

The best Hindus set "first" things first, not only in their minds, but in their days, most of us con-

[1] One or two of their practices are quoted in a later section

centrate on all sorts of things, though perhaps we may pretend to concentrate on "first" things once or twice a week. The best Hindus concentrate really and truly on their religion, which is the mainspring of their lives, the mainspring of our lives is, generally, something else.

They begin their morning with prayer to God, the Father of all, and a blessing on all living creatures That starts the day in the right direction, and, if it be done with concentration, as it is by the Hindus, it makes the minor concentrations of the day perfectly safe. Nearly all of us begin the day in another way, and our minor concentrations may or may not be useful or harmless, but without this beginning there is no guarantee that they will be useful or harmless.

The best Hindus set apart at least one special time, and probably at least two special times, at the tides of the day, as it were—when night is becoming day, and, again, when day is becoming night.

They select at first a quiet place in which to practise Afterwards, thanks to the power gained here, they can concentrate wherever they are, even in a crowd or at a dinner-party

Their system of caste undoubtedly helps concentration The work is settled beforehand to a very great extent, so that there is less worry about what a man shall do. He can give more attention to his spirit and mind He has not to be asking himself whether he has not chosen the wrong occupation.

The best Hindus concentrate rather on their work itself, into which they throw themselves They do not let themselves be distracted by the results—namely, successes or failures, these they regard as a minor matter Their chief idea is to work in the right spirit and in the right way A success or failure must not be allowed to discourage them, or, worse still, make them careless

They attend closely to the position of their bodies The authority mentioned above says that the spine should be straight, that is to say, straight laterally. I am not sure that this is a universal rule, but, for the purpose of strict concentration, the Hindus and the Egyptians seem to have found it important

One practice, however, is certainly important for everyone, and that is correct breathing. Some breathe correctly by nature they need not trouble further, others train so as to master the practice of full and rhythmical breathing, which is described in outline in a later section

Closely connected with breathing is the relaxing of the muscles. In the West, when people wish to concentrate, they usually think it necessary to look strained and ugly. The best Hindus, when they wish to concentrate, relax their muscles, and look at peace, their body is at peace, their mind and spirit is at work This does not mean physical slowness, as Ranjitsinhji and others prove. It means economy, gracefulness, effectiveness

Unlike our educationists, many Hindu "gurus," or teachers, tell their pupils to concentrate first on what is interesting. A story is told of a learner whose teacher ordered him to concentrate on God for a fortnight The learner tried and failed, he said that his attention would wander to his cow "Very well," said the teacher, "concentrate on your cow for a fortnight." The learner succeeded. "Now," said the teacher, "concentrate on your cow's eye." Again the learner succeeded. By degrees, thanks to the interesting beginning, he learnt to concentrate on anything at will.

Comparisons, parables, and allegories are freely used by the teachers, who thus make the teaching real and alive. The teaching is thus not only of abstract ideas, but also of attractive and easily realised facts. Without these comparisons it is doubtful whether concentration would be easy in the first stages As an example, I might refer to Max Muller's work on the Life and Sayings of Râmakrishna. When the sage was asked questions, he preferred to answer by parables, and one is struck by the clearness and enlightening effect of these answers

The best teacher, such as Râmakrishna, studied individuality He did not give the same lessons to all alike While the teacher told the farmer to focus his attention on his cow, he would tell the carpenter to focus his attention on his chisel and on his wood

Yet there are some general practices, for,

instance, learners are told to fix their minds on their hands, to study their hands, and, as it were, think *into* their hands. This makes a good beginning The Hindu soon learns to send his attention to any part of his body at will, and to withdraw his attention from any part Professor Elmer Gates, of Washington, has established the fact that to attend to a part of the body sends more blood there, and raises the temperature of that part.

Needless to say, the best Hindus attend to diet, perhaps rather less to positive food-values than to the avoidance of harmful things, and the preparation of materials Whatever one may say against the physique of the Hindus, one can scarcely deny their purity, calmness, and power of concentration on the things on which they wish to concentrate This is partly because they have strict rules, not only as to what they shall or shall not eat and drink, but also as to the number of meals, and as to the way of eating and drinking

They learn to concentrate on their eating—to realise the tastes of foods, and to enjoy them This is fine training in concentration; and I think that beyond any doubt it helps the digestion, if only because it encourages more thorough mastication.

While the best Hindus are attending to their daily work, they seem to have all the time a consciousness, or one may call it a sub-consciousness or a super-consciousness, of the ideal—that is,

of their own unity with God and of the basic unity of all living things.

Their aim they never entirely lose sight of—it is union with God by greater and greater likeness to God.

The Hindus have their faults, but we gain little by studying the faults, we gain a great deal by studying the good ways, extracting lessons, and adapting these lessons to our daily life.

X

HOW WE CAN PRACTISE OUTLINES OF METHODS

IT is of little use to imitate others slavishly, it is much better to have our own orderly plan—a plan adapted to ourselves and our conditions.

At first we must almost certainly depend a great deal on our conditions; we must choose them carefully. For example, we must choose a quiet place with nothing to distract us, we must choose a suitable time, preferably the early morning, and we must go back to these favouring conditions at intervals. Few episodes in the New Testament are more striking than the visits of Jesus Christ to the hilltops and desert places for the sake of quiet and inspiration, though he was able to do his work day by day, yet clearly he found these special environments of great value He could concentrate wherever he was, but he found these,

For, as a great writer has said, "The culminating point in education is the power to attend to things that are in themselves indifferent by arousing an artificial feeling of interest."

Patience is essential, even those who are very patient with others are apt to be impatient with themselves.

For this reason it may be well to try the plan of many and frequent short spells of concentration. I believe this plan, which can be illustrated by the alternate walk and run, is best for most people. If a man who is out of training (and most of us are out of mental training) runs a mile without stopping, he exhausts himself, and perhaps strains his heart. If, however, he runs 30 yards, then walks until he has recovered breath, and then runs another 30 yards, and so on, he can cover two miles of running almost without fatigue. This short-spell system has a section devoted to it.

The aim of practice must be kept in view: namely to become independent of practice. We practise concentration so that some day we shall not have to practise it I believe there is nothing which cannot become automatic if we practise it rightly. Even the most important and difficult thing of all—prayer—becomes automatic and sub-conscious in the case of the best people. At first, perhaps, they may have had to attend to prayer consciously, now, however, the attitude of mind has been formed, and for most of the day they pray not only without ceasing, but also

without conscious thinking, as easily as the skilled pianist plays while he carries on a conversation.

It is good practice to teach others. At Cambridge I learned far more history and philology by trying to teach it than by reading about it The open-minded teacher sees his own faults as he goes along, and encourages his pupils to criticise him and ask him questions, and then corrects himself accordingly There is no need to teach others in a dogmatic and offensive manner, it is quite sufficient to pretend that one is teaching others! For instance, one can write a letter or an article which will never be sent to any reader or editor. This is a capital plan of improving oneself—this pretence that one is writing for a leading paper It has many of the advantages of teaching, but none of the disadvantages.

Reading, of course, is important also, so long as one reads the right books in the right way—so long as one reads, not with a view merely to soaking in facts, but also with a view to using the matter. So a small section is devoted to the question of the right way of reading · in this section there is a list of a few books that may be useful One should read with a view to reproducing the ideas of the author in one's own words, and the good ideas in one's own life

Gradual progress is one of the best general rules for practice—not to try too much at first—in fact, to try very little—but to master it thoroughly, for instance, instead of rushing through one's bath,

to attend to it and enjoy the soaping and rubbing, and to realise the sensation of it. That is a simple little beginning, but it may go a long way towards the habit of concentration.

Another general rule is to split up the whole into parts, when the whole is very difficult. Benjamin Franklin found this method very useful when he was trying to acquire virtue He said it was easier to acquire separate virtues, which are the parts of virtue, each in turn, than to acquire virtue as a whole He could not concentrate on the whole; he could easily concentrate on each part in turn He describes his plan in detail in his *Autobiography*.

Such are a few of the ways in which we can practise. The details will be found in the subsequent sections

XI

INDIVIDUALITY

IN a previous section I pointed out how the Hindu teachers, like all good teachers, have certain general principles, but adapt them to the individual's needs and characteristics That is where a book must always fall short, it leaves so much to the intelligence of the reader, and the ordinary reader, when he comes to read a book, leaves his intelligence on one side, and either takes the advice literally or does not take it at all.

There must be respect for individuality in the matter of motives, although "first" things must come first, still they may not be the most powerful motive to begin with Work should be in the direction of the highest things, but the actual incentive may be something petty and immediate, for example, one may want athletic success; another, success in an examination, another, social success, another, financial success So long as these small aims lead us in the right direction—towards health, happiness, helpfulness, effectiveness—they are by no means to be omitted Let each find his own strongest motives to encourage him to concentrate

There is individuality in the beginnings, the initial practices, which should, as a rule, be interesting and easy. Games are interesting, and easy to get, for many people; for other people they are dull, and hard to get possibly the most difficult feat for some individuals would be to concentrate during a game, these individuals should find some other beginning—perhaps photography. If one were to choose out any general rule with regard to beginnings, it would be that they should be ready to hand and of frequent occurrence, so as to give plenty of opportunity for a large number of easy tasks

There must be individuality in ways also These many little spells of practice suit most people, whereas long spells of difficult toil suit others far better

The early morning suits most people who have tried it; but there are those who find the evening the best time A few exceptional people can manage to concentrate best in the early afternoon It is important to remember that the same people differ at different ages, whereas children will almost invariably need many little practices, the same people as they grow up should have longer and longer and harder and harder practices

As to the place of practice, here also individuality must be taken into account There are, I know, some who can concentrate best in the train on a railway journey, others, noticeably Americans, who can concentrate best in an office, these same people would find the open country one of the worst places of all, though most people would find it one of the best Some prefer a furnished room, others a bare room.

There is individuality in physical things as well. Nearly everyone is at first helped by muscular tension, afterwards he is helped much more by muscular relaxing

With motives, beginnings, ways and conditions, there are many differences, yet there are, as we shall see, general principles, which some have mastered by a kind of instinct and genius, others must master by conscious care.

The aim is independence the power to concentrate anywhere One should be able to concentrate eventually, without any worldly motive, on the hardest possible subject under the

most trying conditions of time and place. The aim is self-control, self-direction, whatever the conditions may be. The way to this control may be a very narrow set of conditions, different for different people, but unless these conditions lead to independence, so that, for example, a man can concentrate on an apparently dull task even after a "good" meal, ideal concentration has not been reached.

XII

CO-OPERATION

IT has already been suggested in a previous section that we need to apply business-methods to every sphere of social life, including our character-training, and co-operation is one of the most important of all business-methods.

The sums of our schooldays, which represented A, B, and C as each doing a piece of work in so many days, and represented them working together without any advantage from co-operation, were based on ignorance of facts. When two or three people are gathered together there arises a new power which the two or three do not possess individually and separately. The gathering together need not be in place nor in time There need not be the use of the same words, nor even, necessarily, of exactly the same ideas; though of

course, all these conditions may help. If people gather together in the same place, at the same time, and use the same words, with the same ideas, they can exert a force far more powerful than the three could separately.

This is one of the reasons why Americans have what they call "Success Clubs," or "Circles." Members of the "Success Club" sometimes gather together, but more often, being in different parts of America, they think together, at the same hour; they concentrate their attention on the idea of success—sometimes general success, sometimes the special success that each individual needs. They are supposed to think also of the success of the other members The idea of success is often rather a narrow one, namely, of financial success, which appeals to many Americans. Part of the helpfulness of the plan is that, when a number of people agree to do a thing, each person is more likely to do it, and more likely to do it effectively. The mere idea that others are doing it, and perhaps the written pledge that he will do it himself, keeps each person up to the mark.

It is an encouragement to the weak will to know that others, equally weak, are struggling with him now in the same direction

I was very much struck with the power of co-operation in Germany also, where a number of men, accustomed to beer-drinking, were living together in a Nature Cure establishment. Individually they would have found it hard to resist the

temptation to drink beer, collectively, I suppose, there was a sense of *esprit de corps*, and they found no difficulty whatsoever, because each knew that the others were voluntarily depriving themselves in the same way.

It is not every one who cares to co-operate thus with others, but every one can do a little for others. Concentration, hitherto, has been a very selfish affair, almost invariably it has been on the success of the individual in realising some petty ambition, financial or otherwise This is useful, but far from a complete form of concentration, it should be supplemented by concentration on the success of others It is a good plan to think of others as healthy, happy, and generally successful It is an unobtrusive and unostentatious practice, and prevents concentration from being the morbid, self-introspective, self-circumferenced practice that it too often is

I have known cases where two people have concentrated at a given hour, and have interchanged "Suggestions" or "Assertions" of health, self-control, and so on, each concentrating on something which was for the good of the other, concentrating on that which the other lacked, and picturing the other as possessing that thing

The simplest form of co-operation, however, will be the club for discussion The discussion should be of motives, and of ways and means Then the members should pledge themselves to practise for a certain length of time—if possible, at

a fixed hour every day—or to make up arrears on Sundays. Somewhat on the same principle, Dr Paton has a Boys' Guild of Honour, each boy pledging himself to devote at least one hour every week to helping others, without thought of reward. Such a plan appeals to boys, there is no reason why it should not appeal to grown-up people as well. A good deal more of this, and a good deal less of indiscriminate charity, would be of real service to the country

XIII

THE USE OF ODD MOMENTS

IT is said that Houdin, the great conjurer, used to practise concentration and memory-training with his son. They would look at the contents of a shop, and then try to recall these contents At first they could recall only a few; soon they were able to recall everything The practice took up no time, and, generally, was as good as could be devised for their particular purpose Anyone could carry out the same practice in the city. Or he might concentrate on the advertisements which he sees, and then try to recall them all, first getting the general impression of each advertisement, then getting the full picture with its various details.

The best of the odd moments for concentration

are when one wakes, though the practice need not last for a few moments only, but can be continued for minutes, or even for an hour. There are not only the waking moments in the early morning, but also, now and then, waking moments at night, the early morning moments, however, are the most vital. The Greeks had a proverb that the beginning is half of the whole, and they used to begin many of their undertakings with the invocation to the god, saying, "Let us begin with Zeus." The first moments are the best moments for concentration on "first" things

Then there are the waiting moments. Everyone has to wait a certain time each day He may wait for meals, or for the post, or for a friend who should have met him five minutes ago Then there are the waiting times in the train, and, generally, during journeys It is better to practise concentration, even if it is only on the things that one sees and not on "first" things, than to allow one's thoughts to wander to unpleasant and harmful things. For example, nothing is more stupid for one who is waiting, than to fuss about and waste energy, and send out thoughts against the person for whom he is waiting These thoughts do no good either to the man or to the other person, they do much harm —at any rate to the man himself. It would be far better for him to turn his attention to some subject of concentration, for example, if he has athletic ambitions, to turn his attention to athletics

—to think of himself as succeeding at his particular pursuit—running, jumping, or some game

It is important, therefore, to have ready a few subjects for concentration, to which the mind can be turned in an instant.

The habit of turning the attention at will upon pleasant and useful things is invaluable, not only during waiting moments, but also during trying moments—moments of distress, when bad news comes, or moments before some crisis when one would naturally feel nervous, or moments of temptation to impure thoughts

There is need not only of subjects ready to hand, but of special reminders. I have a very useful system which I recommend to those who take my Character Training Course that is, to associate certain ideas with the different parts of a room and with the different articles of furniture in it My pupils tell me that this is of the greatest help to them, for when they look at these articles of furniture they are at once reminded of the right point of view. The chair, for instance, reminds them of sitting and repose and calmness, so that they shall not hurry unnecessarily, the window reminds them of air and the importance of proper ways of breathing

Special occasions and acts should be made taskmasters, as it were, to keep us to certain practices. I advise my Health-pupils whose breathing is weak to practise a full and deep breath through the nostrils when they go out into

the street, and when they wait at a crossing. This, perhaps, gives them twenty or thirty practices in the day. When they take hold of the knob of the door they can use this as a reminder, it serves as a command to practise the breathing.

These odd moments tell in the end by the sheer force of their numbers. Each little moment seems to count nothing, but a hundred little moments in the day count a great deal in the year In ten years they may change a character, they may give a man concentration after arduous practice had failed

They are not tiring, they do not demand great effort of the will, yet they bring endurance and power of will

Above all they are not obtrusive.

The easiest odd moments for concentration on the highest things are probably the early morning and late at night just before sleep This late time is most important, for a special reason. It is during their trance, which is akin to sleep, that the hypnotist can most easily influence others. It is just before sleep that one can most easily influence oneself, that is the best time for changing the character That is the time for concentration on the thing that one really wants.

Another reason for the use of this time is given by Dr George Moore, who says that "the dimness of the evening is favourable to meditation, because much light stimulates the optic nerve to a degree

that distracts the attention from remembered ideas and impresses realities too forcibly to permit imagination free exercise"

XIV

ABSTINENCES IN GENERAL

I HAVE advised elsewhere that individuals should make out two lists of things "undesirable", the first a list of things quite undesirable, the second a list of things usually undesirable, or undesirable except in moderation The command, "Moderation in all things," is a fatal one There are some things (different in the case of different individuals) in which the individual should not be moderate, but should be a total abstainer Each knows best for himself what most of these things are.

Besides abstinence from undesirable things, it is very important to abstain from the desire, and to do one's best to destroy the desire That is where education is singularly deficient, it tells people not to do things, but it does not tell them how not to want to do these things. A man abstains, but he still desires the things On this subject Haddock writes very ably in his book on *Power of the Will* He says—

"This idea is to be taken seriously because it is fundamental good sense, that the cure of bad

habits is to be effected by destruction of desire for their indulgence The desire, of course, precedes the act, and should have one's attention. It can do but little good to refuse the act over and over again, always leaving the desire unmolested, unconquered, the desire will continue to assert itself, and will be almost sure to win in the long run. When the desire intrudes, it should be at once banished out of the mind. One should be on the watch for it all the time—otherwise it will get in. It must be taken in time and not allowed to get a lodgment A desire constantly repulsed for a fortnight should die then The system of refusing the mere act, and leaving the desire in full force, is unintelligent war-tactics, it seems to me

"Or, to put the matter in another way, the cure of habit depends upon keeping the right idea before the mind—either that of the goal or that of the consequence of yielding

"'The strong-willed man is the man who hears the still small voice unflinchingly,' says Professor James, 'and who, when the death-bringing consideration comes, looks at its face, consents to its presence (he is speaking of the cold consideration of reason), clings to it, affirms it, and holds it fast, in spite of the host of exciting mental images which rise in revolt against it and would expel it from the mind Sustained in this way by a resolute effort of attention, the difficult object ere long begins to call up its own companions and

associates and ends by changing the disposition of the man's consciousness altogether.'"

About some particular items one would rather not lay down laws. It is very easy to forbid absolutely a number of different evils, or supposed evils, such as all flesh-foods, all alcoholic drinks, tobacco, tea, coffee, cocoa, pepper, salt, mustard, vinegar, and so forth. But such hard and fast rules, however useful they may be at a certain stage of development, have their disadvantages.

One can, however, with perfect safety, forbid absolutely the unpleasant emotions Here, again, Haddock's advice is helpful—

"Above all, anger, irritation, jealousy, depression, sour feelings, morose thoughts, worry, should be for ever banished from mind by the resolute, masterful will. All these are physiological devils. They not only disturb the mind, but injure the body by developing poisons and distorting cells They prevent an even circulation The poisons which they generate are deadly in the extreme They flatten and tear asunder cells of nervous tissue They induce permanent physiological states which are inimical to vigorous will They dispel hopefulness, and obscure high motives, and lower the mental tone They should be cast out of life with the resolution that as aliens they shall always be treated"

Ralph Waldo Trine says, on this subject—

"Fear and worry have the effect of closing up the channels of the body so that the life forces

flow in a slow and sluggish manner. Hope and tranquillity open the channels of the body, so that the life forces go bounding through it in such a way that disease can rarely get a foothold"

The Ten Commandments of the Old Testament came historically before the more positive Commandments of the New Testament "Thou shalt not" came historically before "Thou shalt," and though it is not perfect wisdom to think of unpleasant things, even with the intention of avoiding them, still these unpleasant things must be kept away altogether by some means or other, even if it be by fear. There is no doubt that a great deal of the success of the Jewish ordinances in compelling obedience was because they appealed to fear as well as to reward One of the Commandments speaks of terrible punishment, another of the Commandments speaks of great reward; and no fair reader of the New Testament can deny that Jesus Christ used both motives when he laid down his Commandments He spoke not only of treasures in heaven, but also of what used to be called eternal punishment

Of all thoughts, the impure are those which must be avoided most carefully They are avoided best, perhaps, by diversion. They are among the greatest enemies of concentration Thoughts of worry must be treated in the same way With regard to these latter, I believe that people, as a rule, treat them too ponderously It is as if they tried to kill a gnat with a policeman's truncheon,

or to shoot a bird with a cannon ball. Such thoughts may be treated far more successfully if they be treated as rude and noisy intruders, instead of being treated seriously as dangerous enemies. Rather regard them as unclean little brats, who had come into your beautiful house and were playing in it, like little Hooligans In such a case you would simply turn them out without effort. "Out you go!" you would say, and out they would go. Treat thoughts of worry and any petty thoughts in the same way, and not with the serious and ponderous consideration due to dangerous enemies.

XV

EXTERNAL HELPS AND THEIR EXACT VALUE

THE ultimate aim of external helps is that a man should master himself, and become independent of external helps. By many people such helps as quiet surroundings are regarded as vital necessities, they should be regarded as stepping-stones towards freedom

An American writer has suggested that one can treat external helps or hindrances, that is to say environment, in three different ways His words are worth studying, even if one disagrees with them.

1 "A good will adjusts to environment, and grows in its mastery

2 "A good will conquers environment, and thus thrives on difficulty.

3. "A good will—at the last resort—forsakes old for good environment, and thus strengthens itself by a rational persistence"

Here I wish to speak especially of No 2, namely of external helps as strengtheners A Hindu Yogî has some excellent words on the subject of this use of special conditions. He first says—

"You must practise at least twice every day, and the best times are towards the morning and the evening When night passes into day, and day into night, it has to pass through a state of relative calmness. The early morning and the early evening are the two points of calmness. Your body will have a like tendency to become calm at those times. We will take advantage of that natural condition and begin then to practise Make it a rule not to eat until you have practised; if you do this the sheer force of hunger will break your laziness In India they teach children never to eat until they have practised and worshipped, and it becomes natural to them after a time, a boy will not feel hungry until he has bathed and practised.

"Those of you who can afford it will do better to have a room for this practice alone, do not sleep in that room, it must be kept holy, you must not enter the room until you have bathed, and are perfectly clean in body and mind. Place flowers in that room always; they are the best

surroundings for a Yogî, also pictures that are pleasing. Burn incense morning and evening. Have no quarrelling, or anger, or unholy thought in that room Only allow those persons to enter who are of the same thought as you. Then by and by there will be an atmosphere of holiness in the room, and when you are miserable, sorrowful, doubtful, or your mind is disturbed, the very fact of entering that room will make you calmer. This was the idea of the temple and the church, and in some temples and churches you will find it even now, but in the majority of them the very idea has been lost The idea is that, by keeping holy vibrations there, the place becomes and remains illumined Those who cannot afford to have a room set apart can practise anywhere they like."

This seems to point to dependence on certain external helps, for it is, clearly, ridiculous to tell ordinary, weak-minded people to practise "anywhere they like" They are too weak to practise such ideas effectively "anywhere they like" They must have special places to begin with. But only to begin with. Later on, the Yogî says, there must be independence—

"For those who want to make faster progress, and to practise hard, a strict diet is absolutely necessary As the organisation becomes finer and finer, at first you will find that the least thing throws you out of balance One bit of food more or less will disturb the whole system, until you get

perfect control, and then you will be able to eat whatever you like"

There are many, however, who remain in a state of dependence And it may be held that the excellence of their work justifies them in seeking the most favourable conditions possible. Haydn, for instance, it is said, relied on certain external helps for his best efforts

"It is related of Haydn, the musician, that, when he sat down to compose, he always dressed himself with the utmost care, had his hair nicely powdered, and put on his best suit Frederick II had given him a diamond ring, and Haydn declared that, if he happened to begin without it, he could not summon a single idea. He could write only on the finest paper, and was as particular in forming his notes as if he had been engraving them on copperplate"

There are, obviously, two chief classes of external helps

First, there are the external helps that are clearly external helps, for instance, there is a quiet and still place and a healthy condition of the body Little need be said about these helps here, they will be treated in subsequent sections Among them, those who have studied the question most deeply insist on fleshless foods, and generally, non-stimulating foods and freedom from much noise. These things are only means to an end, they are not ends in themselves

When some of them are not present we can

imagine them When we have not good news, we can imagine that we have it. When we have not good scenery, we can imagine that we have it. We can imagine all kinds of things that will help us towards concentration. What we possess in the imagination is really ours more truly than what we possess only when we visit it In our imagination we can possess a lovely place in the country, or a cool cave, or at least a special room with quiet colours We may find that the quiet church[1] in the Bayswater Road will be a great help towards concentration, but we cannot always go to it We can go to it a certain number of times, until we can go to it in imagination with almost equally good effect For, once again, our aim is to be independent of such special conditions.

There are sights that help concentration Glaring light does not, neither does loud colour.

So there are sounds and smells that help concentration; others that are distracting

The same applies to temperature The air should be fresh yet warm, though there are many who seem to concentrate best in a stuffy room or train.

The same applies to clothing. It is easier to concentrate when one is dressed in comfortable clothing, than when one is dressed in the clothing of civilisation

Then, again, it is easier to concentrate when there is not work to be done directly afterwards. It is

[1] It is called The Church of the Ascension The walls are hung with beautiful pictures

hard for a man to settle down and focus his thoughts when he has an important engagement within five minutes, and yet that may be just the very time when he needs concentration most

Among the external helps are those reminders which I mentioned in a previous section In somewhat the same way as a dumb-bell reminds certain people to do their physical exercises, so the sight of different parts of the room and articles of furniture may remind them to do their concentration

But the value of these things is not in the things themselves, it is in our use of them. However helpful the quiet light and freedom from loud sounds may be, the glaring light and the accompaniment of loud sounds should be equally helpful some day. When one's power of concentration is fairly strong, then that which used to be a hindrance should be a help It is only by difficulties that one can really strengthen and harden the muscles of one's mind. If everything makes concentration easy, that is well enough at the start, but eventually we must be thankful for circumstances which make concentration hard. Till we have managed to concentrate under the most difficult conditions, we are not masters of the art The greatest of all external helps are those which seem to be hindrances, we must make up our minds to master them by using them, on the same principle that, in games, the better the opponent is, the better is the practice. G. H. Lewes has written some words well worth quoting in this connection—

"Instead of saying that man is the creature of circumstance, it would be nearer the mark to say that man is the architect of circumstances It is character which builds an existence out of circumstance Our strength is measured by our plastic power From the same materials one builds palaces, another hovels, one warehouses, another villas Bricks and mortar are mortar and bricks, until the architect can make them something else Thus it is in the same family, in the same circumstances, one man raises a stately edifice, while his brother, vacillating and incompetent, lives for ever among ruins, the block of granite which was an obstacle on the pathway of the weak, becomes a stepping-stone on the pathway of the strong"

XVI

FOOD AND DRINK WITH DEFINITE RECIPES FOR TRIAL

THERE are some who refuse to alter their way of eating and drinking, because they say that "What's one man's meat is another man's poison" They pretend that there are no general rules. Now, even if there are no universal rules, there are many general rules in fact, I can say from a wide experience that there are certain general rules of diet which improve the health of nine people out of every ten.

Perhaps the first rule would be "No excess"

Above all, there must certainly not be excess of that which is altogether bad for the individual, no matter whether this be alcohol, or flesh-food, or something else. Though abstinence may be best, moderation is better than no change at all Excess of any kind is harmful, excess of bad things may be fatal. As I have said already, there are two classes of things first, things to be abstained from altogether; then, things to be taken only seldom or in moderation

My own personal experience is offered here for what it is worth I find that it is the experience of most people, not of all, I mean that most of those who have changed to a diet like mine have benefited. I have given actual recipes in another book, so I will not trouble the reader with more than a few as samples.

The principles of these recipes is to build the body, repair its waste, give it heat and energy, and also not add to it such "uric acid" or purins and other elements as would clog it.

PROTEID NUT AND CHEESE SAVOURY OR CUTLETS[1]

This is highly concentrated nourishment, being rich in Proteid from Proteid Food, nuts, and cheese

Ingredients. 1 tablespoonful of Nuts, milled, 1 tablespoonful of E M. Proteid Food, 1 table-

[1] In order to prevent the mistake, so commonly made, of thinking that to give up meat is the secret of success, I offer one or two of my own favourite recipes as samples, they are to be judged by their effects

spoonful of grated or milled Cheese; 1 teaspoonful (or less) of finely chopped Onion; enough Milk to mix the above to a thick creamy consistency; 1 oz. of Butter.

Special Utensils. Nut and cheese mill, saucepan, and fireproof dish.

Recipe: Mix all the ingredients in a saucepan over a gas ring or fire, when the butter is thoroughly melted, put the mixture into a fireproof dish, and brown in the oven.

If you prefer cutlets or rissoles, you will need egg and breadcrumbs, Vegetable Butter, and the Fryer

Shape the mixture into cutlets or rissoles, roll in egg and then breadcrumbs, then fry in boiling Vegetable Butter, in the Fryer.

N B—The Vegetable Butter is not boiling until it has ceased to bubble and a bluish colour appears over it It can be strained after use, and then can be used again and again.

NUT CUTLETS[1]

The advantage of nut cutlets over cutlets made with peas, beans, or lentils, is that nuts do not need cooking, whereas these pulses do The body-building elements, in the following very sustaining recipe, are from nuts, eggs, and Proteid Food.

Ingredients: 2 oz. of milled Walnuts (or other Nuts), 1 Egg, 1 oz. of E M. Proteid Food, 1 tablespoonful or less of Tomato Chutney, a pinch

[1] *See* footnote to p 65

or two of Celery Salt, some Vegetable Butter, Breadcrumbs.

Utensils: Nut and cheese mill, and Fryer

Recipe. First put the Vegetable Butter on to boil in the Fryer. Then mix the milled nuts with the Proteid Food, add the celery salt, mix to a stiff paste with the Tomato Chutney, add most of the egg, beaten Form into cutlet shapes, egg and breadcrumb these, and fry in the boiling butter

I mention these two recipes because they have proved useful in hundreds of cases They have helped people to work easily, hour after hour They are readily prepared, and are good to eat when they are cold. It would not be difficult to add a hundred other recipes, but these will suffice as instances of meals that in many cases help concentration.

Why should I recommend such simple dishes? We must distinguish fact from theory. It is a fact that flesh-foods do not suit me This stands beyond all shade of doubt, because, when I have taken them, even without knowing I was taking them (for instance, in the form of soup), I have suffered from heaviness, etc., and, on more than one occasion, from a return of cramp

But that flesh-foods do not suit me because they contain "uric acid" is theory, that flesh-foods produce an equal amount of "uric acid" in everyone is theory also.

If there were a clear distinction between fact and theory, between data and conclusions from them, while the army of cranks would almost disappear,

the army of true scientists would be enlarged to the benefit of humanity.

In this spirit, then, I offer for the reader's consideration a régime of my own that helps my concentration It is a fact that it helps my concentration, it is a fact that it *may* help the concentration of others. It is not a fact that it will. It must be tried fairly, judged by its results and methods, and given up if it does not suit That seems to me to be science in diet. To lay down a universal law on the strength of certain wonderful cures is not science at all. I can cite hundreds of cures, but they do not justify me in dogmatising At the most I can offer the ways as worth a fair trial by those who are dissatisfied with their present powers of concentration

So much for the foods that feed I have dealt with this subject at length in my *Restaurant Recipes* Now as to the foods that do not feed

There are certain stimulants that are convenient. Tea is one of them. It is useless to condemn these stimulants absolutely. The right way of regarding them is to count the cost. On the one hand, put the help that they give for the time, they may enable one to do a very important piece of work at high pressure just when it is needed. On the other hand, put the disadvantages, they may injure the health

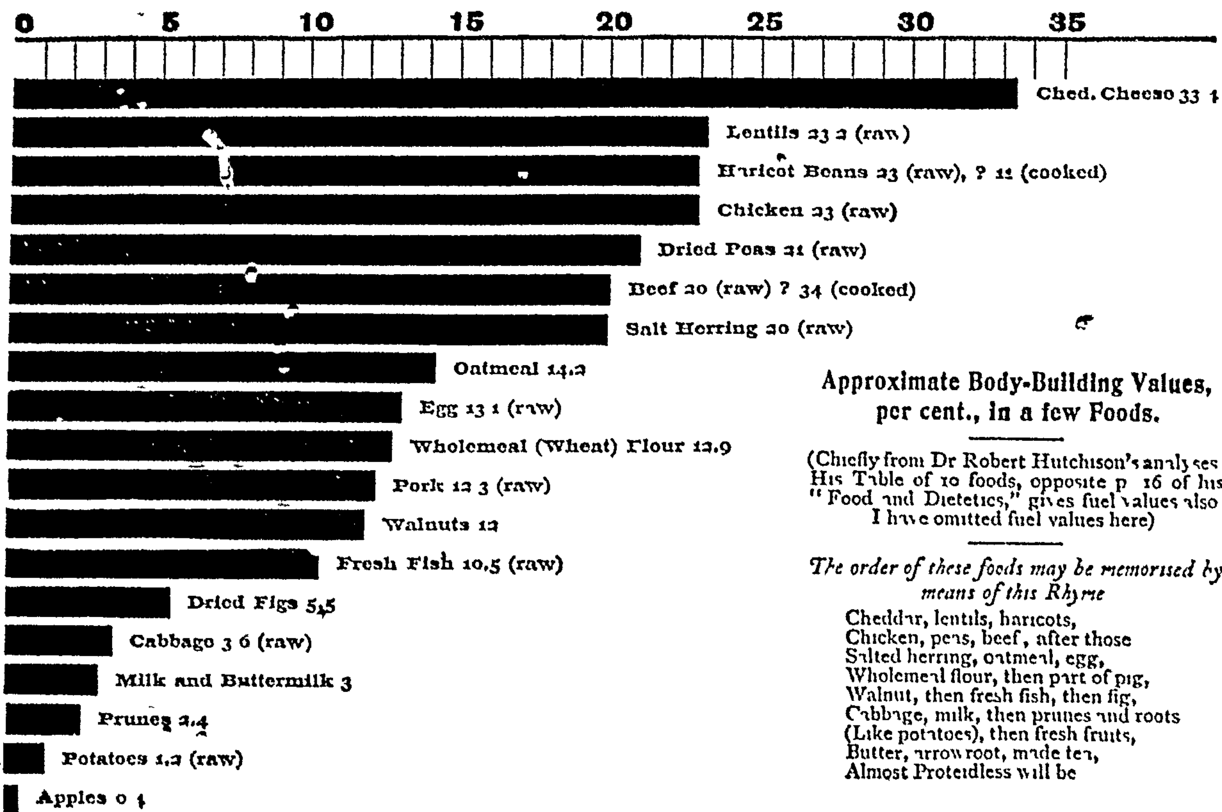
But it is far better to make one's régime of such a nature that it renders one free from any such needs. And one's first studies must be the food-

values of various foods. Too many who have written on diet have written *against* certain things, and have not provided a satisfactory régime instead. They have condemned flesh-foods, certain drinks, certain condiments, they have failed to set in the place of the flesh-foods satisfactory foods to build the body and repair its waste

This Table of Food-values will form a good subject for concentration It is well worth while to learn about Food-values, so that one may not enter rashly upon an unknown land I should advise the reader to get a general idea of what foods feed us and what do not, before he attends much to detail Let him glance through this little Table, without trying to memorise it, every day for a fortnight, by that time he will have learnt the Table without effort

Each must find out his own best sources of body-building material, fattening material, etc, his own best amounts (a very hard matter to decide), his own best time for meals, and his own best number of meals, and—last but not least—his own best cleansing foods.

These cleansing foods are of very great importance. Scarcely anyone to-day has clear blood, nearly everyone to-day needs to clear his blood of poisons, so that there may be no clogging and no heaviness, and so that the whole system may work rhythmically and freely and under control Among the best cleansers are the water-foods, especially well-cooked vegetables (ill-cooked



Approximate Body-Building Values, per cent., in a few Foods.

(Chiefly from Dr Robert Hutchison's analyses His Table of 10 foods, opposite p 16 of his "Food and Dietetics," gives fuel values also I have omitted fuel values here)

The order of these foods may be memorised by means of this Rhyme

Cheddar, lentils, haricots,
Chicken, peas, beef, after those
Salted herring, oatmeal, egg,
Wholemeal flour, then part of pig,
Walnut, then fresh fish, then fig,
Cabbage, milk, then prunes and roots
(Like potatoes), then fresh fruits,
Butter, arrowroot, made tea,
Almost Proteidless will be

vegetables are of little use), salad-foods, fresh fruits, or else the juices of these three classes of foods It is really the juices that are of chief value as cleansers

When one wishes to find out what are one's own best sources of body-building materials, etc., it is a mistake to eat leisurely and masticate thoroughly, for, with this plan, many foods are nearly equalised. Indigestible foods become less indigestible. So in order to judge which foods are in themselves indigestible, and for the purpose of finding out, for example, whether porridge agrees or not, it is a mistake to masticate thoroughly. It is better to gobble it down

A food, ordinarily indigestible, probably will not disagree when it is masticated thoroughly, but one knows that it will disagree when it is gobbled down When I wish to test foods, I do not take a mouthful and masticate it thoroughly, I take many mouthfuls and eat them fast. If the food does not disagree, then I know that it is likely to suit most people.

This is not against leisurely eating as a habit; it is only against very leisurely eating as a fair test of the digestibility of foods

As to the question of drinks, again, I will not lay down laws. I will only offer a few hints

First of all, sipping is probably preferable to swilling, especially if the drinks be very hot or very cold

Secondly, fruits or vegetables may be preferable

to hard water, such as one usually gets in England. The water of fruits and vegetables is not only soft, it is rich in valuable "salts" I think that, on the whole, most of us need the "salts" of vegetables rather than the "salts" of fruits

Thirdly, I believe that in general it is better to drink before meals than during or after them. The reasons are threefold

My own experience and the experience of hundreds of my Health-pupils bears out the truth of these three suggestions, though I offer them only for what they are worth

It is useful to know of that which is both a food and a drink. A food, if indigestible, will, as it were, call away attention from the brain to the stomach. One of the reasons why a heavy meal makes concentration difficult is that the attention is needed by the stomach After a food-drink of the right kind, it seems that scarcely any attention is needed by the stomach, almost all the attention can go to the brain It may not be ideal to work hard after a meal, even after a food-drink, but human beings are human beings, and if they *will* work after a meal, that meal had better be light and digestible, as well as nourishing.

A PROTEID DRINK[1]

There are times when one is too hurried or too tired to eat a heavy meal, one feels inclined only for liquid food Here is a recipe that supplies

[1] *See* footnote to p 65

enough body-building material for one person for one meal

Put 3½ tablespoonfuls of E. M. Proteid Food in a tumbler or breakfast-cup Add grated nutmeg, or vanilla, or other flavouring, if required Mix well and slowly with *boiling* water or milk, as if you were making cocoa

This has been found by many people to form the best breakfast, and by many others to give a good night's rest when taken at bed-time.

PROTEID NUT MILK SOUP[1]

The body-building elements here are provided by the nuts and Proteid Food This soup will be found an excellent meal, occasionally, by itself, to rest the digestion without starving the body.

Ingredients ¼ lb. of Walnuts (or other Nuts), 1 oz. of Proteid Food, 1 pint of Milk, 1 pint of Water, a clove of Garlic, very finely chopped, a good pinch of Celery Salt, Pepper if required

Utensil. Nut and cheese mill.

Recipe Mill the nuts. Put most of the milk and water into a clean saucepan, mix the nut meal with the Proteid Food, and mix both with a little of the milk, into a smooth paste, add this to the milk and water Then add the celery salt, the garlic, and the pepper Bring all to the boil, and let it boil for one minute. Strain and serve.

Among the *more* specially cleansing foods and

[1] *See* footnote to p 65

drinks, an American writer cites the following —

"Buttermilk, prune juice, orange juice, spinach, rye water, and fruit juices in general"

XVII

PHYSICAL HELPS GENERAL OUTLINES

IT is impossible to separate physical helps from external or environmental. Washing is a physical help, but requires the use of water, which is an external help The physical helps are of importance because they are more under our control than the external helps

Take Physical Culture apparatus as a good example of an external help. Such apparatus has its value, but we may not have that with us always Always we have with us the physical helps—the opportunity of breathing, sitting, standing, and moving more correctly

Physical helps have more effect upon a man's health and upon his will-power than is usually understood.

A strong will and power to concentrate depend very largely upon good blood-supply, and, therefore, upon the right food properly digested, as well as upon the right air properly breathed.. It is not simply a matter of digestion, or even a matter of excretion. It is a matter of a sound

body fed by the right foods Wrong foods need not necessarily cause indigestion; they may clog us in other ways, for example, over-acid foods may not disagree in the stomach, but they may vitiate the state of the blood, and tend to slackness of mind as well as of body.

Physical helps, then, must be studied with the greatest care We must learn what are our best physical helps, and then use them, in order that eventually we may have the power of concentration without any conscious use of these helps

The chief helps will be described in more detail in the following sections Here it will be sufficient to give them in outline

They include leisurely eating and leisurely drinking of the right things, and of the right amounts of them, at the right times. Even such a small matter as abstaining from drinking during meals, and taking drink preferably before meals, has been known to help concentration considerably

Then there is abstinence from wrong physical practices There is the right breathing, the relaxing of the muscles with a view to economy, and the practice of the right positions and expressions of the body, for expressions go far towards producing a state of mind corresponding to them, an expression of quietness tending to make the mind quiet.

Then there are certain physical exercises, certain water-treatments, and so forth.

Throughout, there must be respect for individuality. For example, no two people have precisely

the same list of things to be abstained from. Even in the matter of positions of the body there is great variety. Some concentrate better in one position than in another. In respect of exercises, there is probably still greater variety I have known cases where exercises that have made a man restless, and have incapacitated him for concentration on his work, have fitted another man admirably for concentration

Among physical helps we must distinguish also between those that are immediate helps and those that are ultimate helps We are apt to judge by sudden results, as in the case of stimulants which make us feel fit at the time, and probably make us feel unfit and desirous of more stimulants afterwards A good walk or an alternate walk and run may lead a person to health in the course of a week or two, but may entirely unfit him for work immediately after the exercise It is one of the hardest tasks to determine whether a thing is good or not It is easy enough to say whether it is good at the time, it is extremely difficult to differentiate its effects from the effects of other things, and to say whether, in the course of a month or two, it is beneficial Almost the only plan is to alter one item at a time, and to judge its effects. This is a laborious process, but in the end is probably worth while

XVIII

EATING, DRINKING, AND ABSTAINING

IN a previous section I suggested a few hints as to what to eat and drink and abstain from In this section I offer a few hints as to how to eat and drink, and when to eat and drink

It is easy to say how to eat and drink. Mr Horace Fletcher and his followers insist that one shall masticate every mouthful of drink as well as food so long as it has taste, that one shall let the food swallow itself, as it were, and shall then put out the tasteless fragments that remain This plan sounds flawless on the scientific side, but on the practical side it leads to social disadvantage

A more human scheme is to eat leisurely, as Professor Chittenden advises, and with attention I would suggest further, to eat with enjoyment

The advantages of this more thorough, or less careless, way of eating and drinking are numerous They include economy, because more food is used by the body, and, therefore, less bu[illegible] needed They include greater enjoyment—when the habit has become easy They include an instinct, which is developed, for choosing the right foods and drinks. They include a habit of leisureliness And a power of concentration and discrimination and thoroughness are a few of the many benefits

which are claimed for the system of less incomplete mastication.

This applies to drinking as well as to eating. Here we must remember that the saliva which is aroused by mastication has a certain power to neutralise poisons, so that by masticating more thoroughly we counteract some of the bad effects of our mistakes in diet

With regard to abstinence, I have already spoken in general terms Abstinence, in the sphere of food and drink, is a matter of great importance, especially at the beginning of training. If one is weak-willed, however, it may be better to learn abstinence by gradual steps—to take less and less of the desired thing, and meanwhile take more and more of the things that will satisfy the craving to a certain extent

We must be very patient in awaiting results. There is scarcely any good course of reform which has not bad results at first. When a pure diet is started by a person who has been used to an impure diet and has a body clogged with poisons, the immediate effect is apt to be that the poisons come into the circulation and cause depression, restlessness, and a general feeling of unfitness This is not the fault of the pure diet in the present, but of the impure diet in the past Yet the patient can hardly convince himself that he is not being starved He has not been trained to reason fairly, so he condemns the new way. Had he started quietly and progressed gradually,

he would have found scarcely any discomfort at all.

One more warning Let the plan be practised unobtrusively. A vast amount of evil has been done by cranks, who throw their practices indiscriminately down the throats of the public, even during the most social occasions These people do more harm than good They simply disgust ordinary people with reform in general, as well as with their own reform in particular Reform has suffered far more from its earnest advocates than from its earnest opponents

XIX

BREATHING

IN Sir Edwin Arnold's translation of the great Indian epic, *The Mahâbhârata*, there is a very good description of control—

"Good is the steadfastness, whereby a man masters his beats of heart, his very breath of life, the actions of his senses."

But these lines give the processes in the wrong order. A man must master his breath before he can master the beats of his heart It is ridiculous to begin by trying to master the beats of the heart.

Breathing is the most frequent act of life, and, therefore, the easiest to control, if only we make up our minds to control it At present it is the

most badly performed act of life, and that is saying a good deal! Out of many hundreds of my Health-pupils, during the last few years, very few have breathed satisfactorily Most have breathed twice as frequently as they should have done. and it is especially these pupils who have complained of nervousness, restlessness, and failure to concentrate

Now the faults of breathing are very easy to improve by tiny little practices during the day The practices tell not by their length nor by their difficulty, but by their sheer numbers After some thousands of tiny practices a person is on the road to changing his habit altogether These unostentatious repetitions are performed almost without effort, but they are by far the most fruitful of all kinds of Physical Culture

It is not a vast chest that one needs, nor even an enormous expansion, but a thorough, full, and rhythmical manner of inhaling, holding, and exhaling the air

I generally prefer to advise people not to begin by practising many difficult exercises in succession It is much better to use the spare moments, and begin with the very simplest of all exercises

There are various schools, each school having its own particular way of breathing, and pretending that this is the only way The only scientific way, surely, is to develop each part of the full breathing in turn, unless it already exists as a

natural habit, and especially to develop the part which is weakest

The different parts of breathing seem to me to be as follows —The lower breathing, which should be mastered first of all It has two varieties In the first, one breathes in, and sends the abdomen out as one breathes in, one then sends the abdomen in as one breathes out Later on, one can breathe in with this lower breath without sending the abdomen far out The question is rather a complex one, and is open to discussion I have tried to deal with it fairly in my little book on *Breathing*

Next, one can practise the middle breathing, in which one sends the chest out when one breathes in A large chest-expansion need have very little to do with good breathing. It is to a great extent a matter of the muscles about the chest, rather than of the breathing itself

Next, one can practise the lower breathing, followed by the middle breathing, in a single smooth motion, as it were

Last of all, one can practise the higher breathing, which fills the top of the lungs It is comparatively easy if one has mastered the lower and middle breathing.

The breathing out should be far more thorough than it usually is It is not sufficient to inhale oxygen, any more than it is sufficient to eat food, it is just as necessary to breathe out carbonic acid gases and other poisons, as it is to excrete

food that one has used or does not want. The Hindus have a special breath, which they call the cleansing breath. This is how it is described in a popular treatise—

"The Yogîs have a favourite form of breathing which they practise when they feel the necessity of ventilating and cleansing the lungs They conclude many of their other breathing exercises with this breath, and we have followed this practice in this book This Cleansing Breathing ventilates and cleanses the lungs, stimulates the cells and gives a general tone to the respiratory organs, and is conducive to their general healthy condition Besides this effect, it is found to greatly refresh the entire system. Speakers, singers, etc., will find this breath especially restful, after having tired the respiratory organs

"(1) Inhale a complete breath.

"(2) Retain the air a few seconds

"(3) Pucker up the lips as if for a whistle (but do not swell out the cheeks), then exhale a little air through the opening, with considerable vigour Then stop for a moment, retaining the air, and then exhale a little more air. Repeat until the air is completely exhaled Remember that considerable vigour is to be used in exhaling the air through the opening in the lips

"This breath will be found quite refreshing when one is tired and generally 'used up' A trial will convince the student of its merits This exercise should be practised until it can be per-

formed naturally and easily, as it is used to fill up a number of other exercises given in this book, and it should be thoroughly understood"

When one breathes out in the ordinary way, one can relax more and more, it is during the outward breath that the relaxing of the muscles is most natural and easy.

It is almost unnecessary to say why good breathing is important, but a short list of advantages, far from a complete list, may be worth while in order to remind the reader that the practice of breathing is well worth while

Proper breathing helps the digestion and the excretion, it increases the purity of the blood and the nervous energy, it improves the state of the nerves, toning them and yet quieting them It improves the circulation of the blood in the brain, it gives calmness and control, and clearness of thought, as distinct from muddiness of thought, produced by anger, worry, etc It aids mental as well as physical endurance, it helps economy, especially by its rhythm, for rhythm and regularity are among the leading principles of economy.

It is not cranky to practise what is called Suggestion or Assertion. When one breathes in when one inhales fresh air, one can say, "I am inhaling fresh air, and life, and energy." One can add other qualities later on When one exhales, one can say, "I am exhaling carbonic acid gas, and poisons, and undesirable thoughts." That is one

of the uses of physical acts—to serve as symbols of mental cleansing

Another practice that sounds cranky is what has been called Dirigation. Dr Carpenter stated long ago that to attend to a part of the body sent more blood there. A great help towards concentration is the use of the act of breathing One can breathe in air, and then imagine oneself sending it down to the hand or the foot Whatever may be the explanation, the result is beyond doubt — the hand and the foot have more sensation, and especially more sensation of warmth.

At the end of this section I offer, as worth while, one or two favourite Hindu exercises. Here, as elsewhere, there should be correctness, and therefore leisureliness, at the start There should be frequent repetition, not necessarily during a single long spell, but in the course of the day. There should be a realisation of the advantages. There should be patience in waiting for good results. There should be gentleness, one should not tax oneself too heavily.

The great Yogî Vivekânanda wrote—

"The first lesson is just to breathe in a measured way, in and out That will harmonise the system. When you have practised this for some time you will do well to join the repetition of some word to it as 'Om,' or any other sacred word, and let the word flow in and out with the breath, rhythmically, harmoniously,

and you will find the whole body is becoming rhythmical. Then you will learn what rest is Sleep is not rest, comparatively Once this rest has come, the most tired nerves will be calmed down, and you will find that you have never before really rested. In India we use certain symbolical words instead of counting one, two, three, four. That is why I advise you to join the mental repetition of the 'Om,' or other sacred words, to the Prânâyâma

"The first effect of this practice will be that the face will change; harsh lines will disappear, with this, calm thought, calmness will come over the face Next, beautiful voice will come I never knew a Yogî with a croaking voice. These signs will come after a few months' practice. After practising the first breathing for a few days, you take up a higher one Slowly fill the lungs with breath, through the Idâ, the left nostril, and at the same time concentrate the mind on the nerve current. You are, as it were, sending the nerve current down the spinal column, and striking violently on the last plexus, the basic lotus, which is triangular in form, the seat of the Kundalinî Then hold the current there for some time Imagine that you are slowly drawing that nerve current with the breath through the other side, then slowly throw it out through the right nostril This you will find a little difficult to practise The easiest way is to stop the right nostril with the thumb, and then slowly draw in the breath

through the left; then close both nostrils with thumb and forefinger, and imagine that you are sending the current down, and striking the base of the Susummâ; then take the thumb off, and let the breath out through the right nostril. Next inhale slowly through that nostril, keeping the other closed by the forefinger, then close both as before The way the Hindus practise this would be very difficult for this country, because they do it from their childhood, and their lungs are prepared for it. Here it is well to begin with four seconds, and slowly increase. Draw in four seconds, hold in sixteen seconds, then throw out in eight seconds.[1] This makes one Prânâyâma. At the same time think of the triangle, concentrate the mind on that centre. The imagination can help you a great deal. The next breathing is slowly drawing the breath in, and then immediately throwing it out slowly, and then stopping the breath out, using the same numbers. The only difference is that in the first case the breath was held in, and in the second, held out This last is the easier one The breathing in which you hold the breath in the lungs must not be practised too much Do it only four times in the morning, and four times in the evening Then you can slowly increase the time and number You will find that you have the power to do so, and that you take pleasure in it. So, very carefully and cautiously increase as you

[1] This is far too hard a beginning for ordinary people

feel that you have the power, to six instead of four It may injure you if you practise it irregularly"

The second exercise is called the Vitalising Breath.

"This is an exercise well-known to the Yogîs, who consider it one of the strongest nerve stimulants and invigorants known to man Its purpose is to stimulate the Nervous System, develop nerve force, energy and vitality. This exercise brings a stimulating pressure to bear on important nerve centres, which in turn stimulate and energise the entire nervous system, and send an increased flow of nerve force to all parts of the body.

"(1) Stand erect

"(2) Inhale a Complete Breath, and retain same.

"(3) Extend the arms straight in front of you, letting them be somewhat limp and relaxed, with only sufficient nerve force to hold them out

"(4) Slowly draw the hands back toward the shoulders, gradually contracting the muscles and putting force into them, so that when they reach the shoulders the fists will be so tightly clenched that a tremendous motion is felt.

"(5) Then, keeping the muscles tense, push the fists slowly out, and then draw them back rapidly (still tense) several times

"(6) Exhale vigorously through the mouth

"(7) Practise the Cleansing Breath

"The efficiency of this exercise depends greatly

upon the speed of the drawing back of the fists, and the tension of the muscles, and, of course, upon the full lungs. This exercise must be tried to be appreciated. It is without equal as a 'bracer'"

For my own part, I prefer to practise these exercises with each side in turn, letting one hand hang relaxed while the other works.

It would be easy to add a hundred other exercises that help concentration. But these must suffice. Almost everyone who has had difficulty in concentrating, and who has then practised breathing, will agree as to the importance of some breathing-practices in helping the power to concentrate.

XX

MUSCULAR RELAXING

UNTIL I studied the subject, and talked with Miss Call in America, and her pupil Mrs William Archer in England, it had never occurred to me that muscular relaxing was a thing distinct from laziness. Mrs Archer is herself an admirable example of the effect of muscular relaxing on calmness and quietness. The test is not only that she herself is calm, but that she makes those who are with her calm as well. That is the supreme test of any virtue—its power to radiate itself.

Muscular relaxing is the practice most despised

by many of those who advocate training exercises with gymnastic apparatus and "spring-grip" dumb-bells. There are some notable exceptions, but most of these people insist only on what they call "strength," and have no regard whatsoever for economy They imagine that the practice of muscular relaxing is a cranky fad and impracticable Such is their lack of education

Yet any thinking person will agree that even during military drill there should be strict censure by the sergeant if people use muscles unnecessarily. Merely to use the right muscles in the right way is only half the secret of success, the other half is not to use the wrong muscles at all.

And, if this is true during drill, how much more true must it be during mental work and during rest It is amazing that so much "Physical Culture" devotes itself to movement, with utter disregard for the periods of sitting, standing, and lying, which, after all, take up the greater part of our life. Popular "Physical Culture" is not in the least adapted to popular physical needs It teaches its pupils to some extent how to move, it utterly fails to teach them how *not* to move To express this in terms of money, it teaches them some ways of spending energy, it teaches them no ways of saving energy.

The Hindus hold that all energy is one, and Science is moving towards a similar decision. All energy may be one, in spite of its many forms. The Hindus hold that it is possible to turn one

kind of energy into another—for example, physical into mental or spiritual energy by certain special practices If this is so, then the relaxing of the muscles, so that they shall not waste energy, is a matter of great importance for mental work and concentration.

Certainly in my own case I have found muscular relaxing an enormous help towards concentration and general control of the thoughts.

Among its mental effects may be the prevention or cure of anger, worry, fear, and even of exhaustion He who relaxes his muscles wastes less physical power

Professor James, a most practical psychologist, has written a great deal on the subject of muscular relaxation, and especially on the vital need of it for Americans. Here are a few quotations from his *Talks on Psychology*—

"By the sensations that so incessantly pour in from the over-tense excited body, the over-tense and excited habit of mind is kept up, and the sultry, threatening, exhausting, thunderous inner atmosphere never quite clears away. If you never wholly give yourself up to the chair you sit in, but always keep your leg and body-muscles half contracted for a rise, if you breathe eighteen or nineteen instead of sixteen[1] times a minute, and, never quite breathe out at that,—what mental mood *can* you be in but one of inner panting and

[1] This seems to me to be far too large a number for the normal healthy person

expectancy, and how can the future and its worries possibly forsake your mind? On the other hand, how can they gain admission to your mind if your brow be unruffled, your respiration calm and complete, and your muscles all relaxed?

"Dr Clouston was certainly right in thinking that eagerness, breathlessness and anxiety are not signs of strength· they are signs of weakness and of bad co-ordination. The even forehead, the slab-like cheek, the cod-fish eye, may be less interesting for the moment, but they are more promising signs than intense expression is of what we may expect of their possessor in the long run Your dull, unhurried worker gets over a great deal of ground, because he never goes backward or breaks down Your intense, convulsive worker breaks down and has bad moods so often that you never know where he may be when you most need his help,—he may be having one of his 'bad days'

"We say that so many of our fellow-countrymen collapse, and have to be sent abroad to rest their nerves, because they work so hard I suspect that this is an immense mistake I suspect that neither the nature nor the amount of our work is accountable for the frequency and severity of our breakdowns, but that their cause lies rather in those absurd feelings of hurry and having no time, in that breathlessness and tension, that anxiety of feature and that solicitude for results, that lack of inner harmony and ease, in short by which with us the word is so apt to be accompanied, and from

proportion in life. After the practice of it, one is less likely to set "second" and "third" things first.

XXI

POSITIONS AND EXPRESSIONS

PROFESSOR JAMES has some very interesting remarks on the subject of expressions, in his famous work, *Talks to Teachers on Psychology*—"If we only check a cowardly impulse in time, for example, or if we only *don't* strike the blow or rip out with the complaining or insulting word that we shall regret as long as we live, our feelings themselves will presently be the calmer and better, with no particular guidance from us on their own account. Action seems to follow feeling, but really action and feeling go together, and by regulating the action, which is under the more direct control of the will, we can indirectly regulate the feeling, which is not. Thus the sovereign voluntary path to cheerfulness, if our spontaneous cheerfulness be lost, is to sit up cheerfully, to look round cheerfully, and to act and speak as if cheerfulness were already there. If such conduct does not make you soon feel cheerful, nothing else on that occasion can.

"So to feel brave, act as if you *were* brave, use all your will to that end, and a courage fit will very likely replace the fit of fear

"Again, in order to feel kindly toward a person to whom we have been inimical the only way is more or less deliberately to smile, to make sympathetic inquiries, and to force ourselves to say genial things One hearty laugh together will bring enemies into a closer communion of heart than hours spent on both sides in inward wrestling with the mental demon of uncharitable feeling. To wrestle with a bad feeling only pins our attention on it, and keeps it still fastened in the mind whereas, if we act as if from some better feeling, the old bad feeling soon folds its tent like an Arab, and silently steals away"

I cannot quite agree with him I am sure that to express cheerfulness tends to a feeling of cheerfulness, if one lets oneself go to the expression, but merely to express an emotion, as many actors do, and even to hold that expression, does not necessarily mean to feel that emotion It is necessary for a person to express the emotion—cheerfulness, confidence, etc.—and then to let himself go to it, to surrender to it, as it were, his heart and his lungs, in fact his whole body, as well as his extremities and his face.

The Yogî Vivekânanda insists on another kind of expression. It seems to represent no particular emotion, but he says it is vitally important if we are to concentrate rightly. It is the straightness of the body. Another writer, after pointing out how this was the ancient Egyptian method, gives the following instructions —

Even the relative position of the organs is a matter of importance. It has a real effect upon the power to concentrate An American authoress says—

"In the act of sitting, nearly everybody slips the organs out of place by bending the head forward as the first movement in sitting. This depresses every organ in the body, as everyone may see who will place the hand on the pelvic region and bend the head forward One might suppose, without knowing the construction of these organs and their marvellous adjustment, that the organs would right themselves again after the person is seated, this, however, is a mistake. There is a beautiful provision for keeping the organs well in place, but only if the hip-joint is used before the head and shoulders are bent forward. The ligament which passes entirely under the pelvic organs is so related to the hip-joint that these organs are drawn back by bending the joint To make this important office of the ligament very plain, imagine each end of it to be attached to a pulley, which, when turned with the bending of the hip-joint, shortens the ligament, making it a secure support to prevent the pelvic organs from being depressed and losing their integrity by falling below the line of safety But this excellent arrangement for perfect service is interfered with by nearly everybody because of the habit of bending the head forward in the act of sitting and in every activity requiring the body

to bend forward. It is much easier to bend first in the hip-joints, and when the body is at an angle of forty-five degrees the ligament is so fastened and the organs so held in place that the flexibility of the spine may do the rest without injury and give to every movement the grace that it is the office of the spine to give But the spine cannot carry the organs, and so disorder is the result of giving it this work to do."

It is not always in the still position that one can concentrate best, nor even in the sitting position Personally, I can concentrate best in the lying position, others are helped by walking, others by still more active exercise, at any rate at intervals.

Here, also, there must not be hard and fast rules; there must be respect for individuality. Only it must not be assumed that the position and expression which seem to have suited one hitherto are therefore the best possible. It is as well to try new ways, in case they may suit still better I used to be able to concentrate best when I frowned. Now I concentrate best when I do not frown It took me a long while to get over the old habit, but I have never regretted the trouble. It is, as Dr Clouston pointed out, a serious fault in the expression of Americans, and of those English people who are, in this respect, becoming Americanised—

"You Americans," he said, "wear too much expression on your faces. You are living like an

army with all its reserves engaged in action The duller countenances of the British population betoken a better scheme of life. They suggest stores of reserved nervous force to fall back upon, if any occasion should arise that requires it This inexcitability, this presence at all times of power not used, I regard as the great safeguard of our British people. The other thing in you gives me a sense of insecurity, and you ought somehow to tone yourselves down. You really do carry too much expression, you take too intensely the trivial moments of life"

XXII

PHYSICAL EXERCISE

THE great Dr Maudsley maintained that one who was unable to regulate his muscles was unable to regulate his mind And it is partly in order to regulate their minds that people should go in for some sort of physical culture But this should not be along the lines which are advocated by ignorant instructors, not along the lines of fearful effort to perform dull movements for half an hour or an hour in succession That bears no closer relation to true physical culture than cramming does to true education

As an example of suitable physical culture for most people, take the series of movements sug-

gested in another book, take the series of leg-exercises, beginning with the raising of the knee up towards the chest Anyone who practises this will find that he can raise his knee higher if he clasps his hands on his leg just below his knee, and then pulls his knee up Now do this exercise slowly, not simply leisurely, but almost painfully slowly. That is the exact opposite of the advice given in exercise-books, which encourage tension combined with hurry. Regard this as an exercise in patience and realisation. Realise the feeling of the movement Do not strain, but be "aware" of the muscles that you are exercising.

Assist yourself in the practice by understanding its value in making the leg flexible, in improving the walk and the digestion and excretion, in squeezing the liver, in freeing the circulation, and so forth

Help your concentration by Pre-suggestion, which is described in another section for example, by saying to yourself, "This one thing I am doing now with all my heart, but leisurely."

Help your concentration, also, by determining that, when you have done the exercise, you will keep still and recall the exercise in your imagination, but without moving

Do not hold your breath Continue your breath; let it be full and rhythmical

Do not grip your hand keep your hand limp. Keep your face easy also. Do not frown or look anxious.

Now observe what kind of concentration this is It is concentration on the muscles which you are using, and also, though at a different time, on the effects of the use of these muscles. It is concentration locally.

Contrast the ordinary "Physical Culture," which, during this movement of the muscles of the body and leg, will tell you to grip a dumb-bell, and attend to that It is as if one told a clerk to do a piece of work, and attend, meanwhile, to the work which some other clerk was doing.

Another help towards concentration —During this exercise, keep your leg and foot in sight, look at them It is astonishing how much more sensation you can get in any part by thinking of it and looking at it, and how much more blood you can bring to it, as Dr Carpenter has pointed out; though, I think, he has not noticed the effect of directing the sight to any part of the body this sends more blood to it as well as more sensation

Perform the exercise, then, slowly and accurately Before you begin, concentrate your mind on the advantages of it, and then, while you do it, on the muscles which you are using Look at the parts, you are using, and get the sensation of the movements Then rest, and repeat the exercise in imagination without moving

Then do the exercise again. And again concentrate on the sensation, so as to supplement and correct your first exercise in imagination

Now for a very important point A most

successful, because a much advertised, exponent of "Physical Culture" makes a gigantic error when he tells people to go on performing movements day after day. The main aim of concentration is delegation. We concentrate on a thing partly in order that we may be relieved from concentration on it in the future, that is to say, in order that we may not have to concentrate on this particular thing any longer. The first error, then, is concentration continued long after it has become utterly unnecessary.

The second error is concentration on the wrong part, not on the part which is being exercised, but, for example, on the hand holding the spring-grip dumb-bell.

The third error is the perpetual strain. We can get far more good from exercise done leisurely than by continued rapid and exhausting effort.

As an example of local concentration, keep your whole body still, and especially keep your hands limp. Now move each shoulder in turn in various ways, send it up, then down, then back, then forward, then round. Fix your attention on your shoulder, look at it, concentrate on it It is an exercise for the shoulder, and for no other part of you It would be a great mistake to grip with the hand at first, for that would distract your attention from your shoulder

Now, as a more advanced exercise, go correctly through a stroke at Racquets or your favourite ball-game, or a swing at Golf. When you have

got the direction of the movement right (I will not weary the reader with a description of it here), hold the implement in your hand loosely as you go through the movement, but just before you come to where the ball is, or where you imagine the ball to be, grip your implement tightly. If it is a Golf-swing, you can let a circular piece of paper represent the ball on the floor then, just before your club reaches this, grip the handle tightly. You will be astonished at the difficulty of this when you come to actual play, and yet you find that to grip just then will give your stroke enormous power It is fine practice in concentration, because you have, as it were, to "turn on" your concentration at a certain definite moment and not before.

Somewhat similar is the practice in voice-production, though it is far easier. In this, concentration may come in the middle of the note, that is to say, the note starts without effort, and ends without effort, the effort is in the middle.

A different kind of exercise is suggested by Haddock. It is an exercise in pointing In this you can fix your attention on the spot on the wall, then, without entirely losing sight of that spot, fix your attention on the tip of your finger This double concentration, the concentration on the fixed object and on the moving object, is excellent practice Its mental lesson is too obvious to need mentioning.

"Stand erect Breathe and wink naturally.

Fix the eyes upon some small object on the wall of your room, say a nail-head or the corner of a picture, or a round spot made with a pencil, and large enough to be seen at a distance of eight feet. Place the tip of the forefinger of the right hand, palm towards face, directly on a line running from the right eye to such object or spot Slowly move the hand, palm toward the face, from your body along such imaginary line, keeping the tip of the finger rigidly thereon, until the arm is fully extended, and return to the original position in the same manner."

Here are two exercises, by Rocine—

"Stand, fill your lungs with air, hold your arms out in a side direction until they are horizontal with your shoulders, hold your palms up; then rise on your toes, and, as you are doing this, elevate your arms high above your head and stretch them as high as you can. Do this four times."

"Stand perfectly upright, and support the weight of your body on the balls of your feet, at the same time as you are holding your arms straight down. Hold your arms down as low as you can, without bending your body. Inhale and exhale air slowly, and stand perfectly poised for two minutes This is a good position for calmness, poise, and breathing"

For my own part I should prefer to do this exercise with each arm in turn, keeping the other arm and hand limp meanwhile, during which I should concentrate my attention on my hand or

on my arm—on each hand or arm in turn. I should do the exercise very leisurely

Here is an exercise which, while it is practice in concentration, is also excellent for securing relief from concentration. How often at night-time we suffer from the effects of prolonged work We have focussed our thoughts on our subject, and now we cannot divert them This practice will help to remove them Keep your left hand limp, stroke your forehead upwards, beginning from above the eyes, stroke softly and leisurely over your head and down upon your neck behind. Repeat this a few times, realising the sensation Then keep still and relax, and recall the sensation Do not move, but imagine yourself going through this movement again Then repeat the movement and recall it once more Do it very leisurely, breathe very leisurely all the while

It would be easy to suggest a hundred other physical exercises Many of those which I give to my individual Health-pupils would be appropriate, but these few will be sufficient to enable the reader to devise others for himself They are intended not to be a complete physical education, but rather to show a method of making physical culture a training-ground in true concentration, instead of being, as it is now, too often a caricature of the true science and art.

Quite apart from the above-mentioned advantages of such exercises, and especially their effects on health, there may be another reason for their

practice, a reason suggested by Professor James. He says—

"I may at last, as a fifth and final practical maxim about habits, offer something like this: *Keep the faculty of effort alive in you by a little gratuitous exercise every day.* That is, be systematically heroic in little unnecessary points, do every day or two something for no other reason than its difficulty, so that when the hour of dire need draws nigh, it may find you not unnerved and untrained to stand the test. Asceticism of this sort is like the insurance which a man pays on his house and goods. The tax does him no good at the time, and possibly may never bring him a return But, if the fire *does* come, his having paid it will be his salvation from ruin. So with the man who has daily inured himself to habits of concentrated attention, energetic volition, and self-denial in unnecessary things He will stand like a tower when everything rocks around him, and his softer fellow-mortals are winnowed like chaff in the blast"

XXIII

MISCELLANEOUS PHYSICAL HELPS

IT would be easy to write a large section on this subject, even if one only touched briefly on a few of the helps used by well-known men and women to increase their powers of concentration.

Consider water-treatments alone. Some precede their study by washing (or at least by putting their wrists and hands) in cold water A few go to the trouble of alternate hot and cold water for the hands I know one person who has a bath in exceedingly hot water before he does any important brain-work Some water-treatments are special helps to concentration, some are general helps to health. The familiar use of the cold towel round the head is a special help, not tending to general fitness, and the same would apply to a possible method, namely, that of keeping the feet *cold* I have often noticed that during and after very hard brain-work, when my brain-work is at its best and easiest, my feet become very cold. It occurs to me that to have the feet cold may, under certain conditions, increase the power of brain-work for a time Such a plan, however, would not be for general fitness, it would correspond more closely to the use of stimulants

Another help is to change the clothing Many who feel worn-out feel fresh when they have taken off their clothes and put on fresh clothes

There is no need to cite more instances. It is only necessary to remember that such helps, however useful they may be now and then, are not to be depended on if we would have true concentration, which must be free from such restraint

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XXIV

MENTAL HELPS GENERAL OUTLINES

MENTAL helps deserve most attention, because they are valuable everywhere, being within oneself, and because, if rightly practised, they should involve many of the physical For example, it is beyond all doubt that concentration is helped by the control of the emotions, and especially by the control of, and freedom from, fear, anxiety, and anger This mental control in its turn regulates the breathing and the physical expression, which in their turn again help the power of concentration

The chief mental helps will be treated in detail in the following sections Here it will suffice to summarise them

I have already spoken of avoidances and abstinences, particularly one must avoid hurrying and worrying

More positive than this is the cultivation of stillness and silence, and, more generally, of leisureliness This, and most other mental exercises, will be found difficult unless the right motives for practice are constantly before the mind.

Therefore, it is important to study the advantages and the ends in view, not only the remote and, perhaps, noble aims, but also the near and possibly the petty aims, which are none the less

powerful at the start because they seem trivial to the philosopher. It is, as a rule, these advantages which lead to regular self-training For instance, many urge the public to change its diet from motives of humaneness and kindness to animals The public is little moved by this idea. It may, however, be moved by the desire to save money, and thus have more money to spend, or by the desire to improve the figure or the complexion, and so on And the other desires may follow in time The great thing for a reformer to do is to find out which the most powerful motives are, and then to appeal to them

Besides reminding oneself of the advantages of practice, one should influence the under-mind by what has been called Self-suggestion During a game the captain says to a man, "Steady now", and what a captain says to a man, a man can say to himself. The term "Assertion" is, however, preferable to the term "Suggestion," as we shall see in a later section It may be helped by the use of diagrams which appeal to the eye, and thus work powerfully on the mind The object of these practices is realisation

That is the object also of imagination, which may be called the pioneer of improvement. Imagination is a great mental help towards concentration, as we shall see, as well as a part of concentration itself

In most practices the average person errs in trying too many things at once, and too hard

things, and too dull things also, and by not using his opportunities, especially opportunities for interesting little practices, and opportunities for easy little practices, particularly those in daily life. Every day we brush our hair, and wash Here is an opportunity for concentration, which enables one to enjoy the process more, while cultivating the power of attention

Reading and listening are other occasions for practice, as it is, we read and listen a great deal, but we waste nine-tenths of the value of what we see and hear through want of concentration of the right sort.

The average person errs, also, because he fails to repeat Repetition is a vast force, so is regularity A special section will deal with regularity of a new kind—not so much the practice of something or other at a given moment, as the practice on a given occasion; for instance, whenever one goes out of a room or a house.

Closely connected with regularity and repetition is the habit of making up arrears Sunday is the best day for this In "Physical Culture" a man buys an apparatus, and for two or three days goes through the long "course," then drops it, loses his self-respect because he has dropped it, and gives up the exercises If he had started gently, and kept up the repetition and regularity as far as possible, and made up the arrears on Sunday, he would be likely to continue the "course" without much difficulty

There are many other faults Most people start too late, then, when their brains are, as it were, set and fixed, they are impatient in expecting immediate results. Or they are disorderly and unmethodical in their scheme of work, they try to concentrate on the complex whole, instead of concentrating on each part of it in turn Once again, they try practices that are long and wearying And they neglect recreation

For this reason I have given special sections on timeliness, thoroughness, order and arrangement, the "Part by Part system," and the system of short spells and recreation.

Then there is the difficulty which one notices even in games, namely, of shutting off the sense-impressions which interfere with concentration. Many Golf-players are disturbed by the sight of something moving quite close to them; they try to keep their eye on the ball, but part of their eye, so to speak, seems to wander off to some flickering white thing Similarly, in mental concentration, one must learn to shut off the senses that do not belong to the study

Another difficulty that has made the practice unpopular is the obtrusiveness and conspicuousness of many "concentrators" There is no need for this I have devoted a section to the very important topic of practice which shall not be objectionable to others, and shall not mark the person as a crank and a faddist.

Last of all, there are certain actual dangers in indiscriminate practice Against these also I have warned the reader

XXV

STILLNESS AND SILENCE

IN the section on abstinences I did not mention the particular kind of abstinence which is hardest, and is extremely useful for him who would concentrate successfully. It is abstinence from movement and from words Further advanced than abstinence from words is abstinence from thoughts, which is thus described by a Hindu Yogî —

"How hard it is to control the mind. Well has it been compared to the maddened monkey. There was a monkey, restless by its own nature as all monkeys are. As if that were not enough someone made him drink freely of wine, so that he became still more restless Then a scorpion stung him. When a man is stung by a scorpion he jumps about for a whole day, so the poor monkey found his condition worse than ever. To complete his misery a demon entered into him What language can describe the uncontrollable restlessness of that monkey? The human mind is like that monkey, incessantly active by its own nature, then it becomes drunk with the wine of desire,

thus increasing its turbulence. After desire takes possession, comes the sting of the scorpion of jealousy of others whose desires meet with fulfilment, and last of all the demon of pride takes possession of the mind, making it think itself of all importance. How hard to control such a mind.

"The first lesson, then, is to sit for some time and let the mind run on The mind is bubbling up all the time. It is like that monkey jumping about Let the monkey jump as much as he can, you simply wait and watch. 'Knowledge is power,' says the proverb, and that is true Until you know what the mind is doing you cannot control it Give it the full length of the reins, many most hideous thoughts may come into it, you will be astonished that it was possible for you to think such thoughts But you will find that each day the mind's vagaries are becoming less and less violent, that each day it is becoming calmer In the first few months you will find that the mind will have a thousand thoughts, later you will find that it is toned down to perhaps seven hundred, and after a few more months it will have fewer and fewer, until at last it will be under perfect control. But we must patiently practise every day."

Floyd Wilson gives still more elaborate instructions. He says—

"The path which leads to the silence may be found by devoting a particular time each day to

going where one can be alone, sitting in a chair where he can sit erect and feel, in short, that the chair fits him I request him not to lean back or rest his head at the commencement of the work. In that firm position let him learn to be still physically Let his thoughts wander as they may, he should pay no attention to them. Later he will train them to do his bidding.

"If at the commencement he finds it best to remain only fifteen or twenty minutes in that position, very well Let him come to it again and again, making the sitting time a little longer each day Then, after a week, or several weeks of practice, as the case may be, and after he has learned to sit still while erect for a whole hour, the real work will begin I would then have him go to his sitting, taking the rigid position for about fifteen or twenty minutes, centralising his thought upon what he desires By that I mean he should draw mental image of it and hold it before him. If it is an accomplishment which he has not, let him image himself as having already attained it and standing before people throwing out evidence of this fact Let him then crystallise the description of that in some short sentences, as, 'That is the ideal I seek,' 'That is myself,' 'I am thus and so,' for by these means he is adding to Hindu meditation the method of Jesus Christ, of praying as if already the blessing had been received

"When he has succeeded in making this image

clear to his mental vision, and has found a few short words capable of being woven into a thought which stands for that image, then rigour should be succeeded by passiveness Let the head rest on the back of the chair, after filling the mind with these affirmations, and then relax. Still hold the mental gaze to the image, lifting the real self towards it till a merger is made. Then let one contemplate passively, while in this position, his growth and continuing unfoldment, as he waits in the silence the gifts it may bring

"He must find the time and go there in faith with purpose fixed, and work as all must work. Great advancement will be made while one is travelling on the path leading to the hall of silence"

Haddock suggests a physical exercise that may help —

"Stand erect Breathe naturally. In the most resolute mood possible, stand perfectly still while counting a hundred at a moderate rate There should be no movements except those of breathing and winking Do not stare Do not permit the body to sway Stand firmly, but naturally. Relax and rest for a hundred counts. Repeat, with rests, six times"

Other special physical exercises are recommended by Haddock, whose book on *The Power of Will* is excellent, in fact, too excellent He suggests practices that not one person thousand would trouble to follow out, the extent he commands

Relaxing is an extraordinary help towards stillness and silence. Muscular relaxing and breathing have been described in a previous section It must not be imagined for a moment that these practices lead to weakness, as a matter of fact, they lead to real "power through control." "Speech is silver, silence is golden" Often, also, speech may be weakness, silence may be strength; speech and movement may be waste and ugliness, silence and stillness may be economy and, if not gracefulness, at least dignity They may be signs of mastery and helps to further mastery.

One of the most elaborate and advanced treatises on the subject of silence is *Light on the Path* Its weakness for the beginner is that its practices are chiefly mental; it does not suggest many physical helps, neither does it suggest environmental helps These are by no means to be neglected

For example, to go up to the top of a hill or mountain, or out into a solitary place, are practices that are an enormous help towards stillness and silence. On the top of the mountain and in the solitude there is a stillness and silence which can be made to enter into the body and mind and become part of them, as surely as the food we eat. Both stillness and silence are symbolic of quiet mastery and control. Neither of them is effeminate or easy In fact, stillness and silence are often the only possible principles of manhood, especially under extreme provocation

They are also great helps towards a realisation of truth and a fair and unprejudiced opinion Vivekânanda has a striking passage to illustrate this—

"The bottom of the lake we cannot see, because its surface is covered with ripples It is only possible when the ripples have subsided and the water is calm, for us to catch a glimpse of the bottom If the water is muddy, the bottom will not be seen, if the water is agitated all the time, the bottom will not be seen If the water is clear, and there are no waves, we shall see the bottom. That bottom of the lake is our own true Self, the lake is the Chitta, and the waves the Vrittis. Again, this mind is the three states, one is darkness, which is called Tamas, just as in brutes and idiots, it only acts to injure others No other idea comes into that state of mind Then there is the active state of mind, Rajas, whose chief motives are power and enjoyment 'I will be powerful and rule others' Then, at last, when the waves cease and the water of the lake becomes clear, there is the state called Sattva, serenity, calmness. It is not inactive, but rather intensely active It is the greatest manifestation of power to be calm. It is easy to be active Let the reins go, and the horses will drag you down Any one can do that, but he who can stop the plunging horses is the strong man Which requires the greater strength, letting go, or restraining? The calm man is not the one who is dull You must

not mistake Sattva for dulness or laziness. The calm man is the one who has restraint of those waves. Activity is the manifestation of the lower strength, calmness of the superior strength"

Apart from this merit of stillness and silence, there is often the further merit of safety. Hiram Butler points this out—

"Think of it! Suppose you to-day were in a condition so that every word that you uttered were as immortal as the Spirit of God, and, being immortal, would create for itself a body and become a live intelligent entity of which you would be the father Mark you, the words of the Spirit are God's words, therefore immortal formations of his own quality, and if those formations are made by and out of spirit which is immortal, then you have made an immortal entity, either a good or an evil Spirit. Think of it a great deal! Why? If you meditate upon that, take it home and treasure it your words will be few and well chosen.

"Let your words be few, well weighed, and with a beneficent purpose behind them, before you let them pass your lips."

XXVI

LEISURELINESS

IN a previous section I touched on the habit of thorough mastication I suggested that, excellent as it was in the abstract, in the practical

concrete it was too serious to please most people, I suggested that a more feasible rule was leisureliness To eat leisurely is an idea that appeals to more people than to masticate thoroughly What applies to eating applies to almost everything. Leisureliness is what we need. Like muscular relaxing, it has nothing to do with laziness It especially concerns the breathing. One should breathe calmly and quietly, even if the extremities are hurrying Every player of games should realise the vital importance of leisureliness, and especially of leisurely breathing For it is to a great extent true that the eye depends on the breathing, and the skill depends on the eye

There are two unleisurely ways of breathing First, there is the short, shallow, sharp and jerky, way Then there is the restrained and tense way, as when one is engaged in a supreme and anxious effort Both ways are to be avoided as a general rule The breathing should be, as far as possible, long, deep, unhurried, rhythmical, yet easy and lithe, so to speak

My personal experience is that leisureliness, to which leisurely breathing is an easy means and of which leisurely breathing is a sure sign, means poise, control, and a sense of perspective, that it means economy, involving less work to be undone or re-done, that it means pleasanter work, and work that is not so uncomfortable for others Hurry and leisureliness alike are contagious He

is most truly leisurely who makes those around him leisurely and sets them at their ease

Leisureliness does not suggest concentration, to the popular mind. If you want to suggest concentration—for instance, to denote it on a poster—you represent a man frowning, looking as if there were only one moment left in which to accomplish the task of a century. Leisureliness, however, means the highest concentration, which does not lose sight of "first" things, provided that it be combined with activity. The old Latin saying, *festina lente*, was an excellent one. It does not mean hurry slowly, so much as be quick in a lithe way. That is to say, be quick without hurry, be leisurely without laziness. Without leisureliness, there cannot be ideal concentration.

XXVII

STUDY OF ADVANTAGES AND ENDS IN VIEW

WHY do alcohol-drinkers drink alcohol? Chiefly because they remember the immediate effects of alcohol-drinking in the past. These effects were pleasant. In my character-training courses I urge pupils to study the disadvantages of such habits, and the advantages of the opposite habits At present, the immediate effect—which is pleasant—dominates, it must be

outweighed by repetition Haddock has some useful remarks on the subject—

"Variations in the relative strength of motives mainly arise from the degree of attention that we give to them respectively People often act wrongly or unwisely because they fail here Thus, for example, a hungry man, seeing bread in a baker's window, is tempted to break the glass and steal a loaf of bread. The motive here is the prospect of satisfying his hunger. But the man is not a mere machine, impelled by a single force He knows that, if he is caught, he will be punished as a thief He knows, too, that this is a wrong act which he is considering, and that his conscience will reprove him Now he can fix his attention upon one of these restraining motives. The impulse to break the glass thus loses its power The element of time is an important factor, for the longer he delays and deliberates, the more numerous will be the restraining motives which arise in his consciousness—provided he dwells upon reasons opposing the act"

The motives which lead to right action must be made to outweigh the motives which lead to wrong action This must be effected chiefly by vividness of imagination and by repetition The individual must study the advantages of the right line of action for himself

It is essential that he should remind himself, not merely of vague motives, however virtuous, but of motives which shall really attract him For

XXVIII

VERBAL SELF-SUGGESTION OR ASSERTION

A WELL-KNOWN professional told me that, when he was hard pressed in his championship matches, he would say to himself, "Now then, here's your chance to show your true mettle. This will bring out your play nicely" He found that such "Self-suggestions" were singularly effective, almost as effective as if someone else had encouraged him in this way.

The most familiar example of the power of Self-suggestion or Assertion is that, if one says one will wake at a certain hour in the morning, one will usually wake at or before that hour. Hundreds of people have proved this by personal experience. In this case the command is given, or the statement is made, to the under-mind, which takes for granted and works out whatever is said to it with conviction, or even with a tone of conviction.

This obedience of the under-mind to the ordinary mind is seen still more clearly when people are hypnotised. In the hypnotic state they are told by another to give up bad habits, or they are told that they will give them up, or that they are giving them up, or that they have given them up The usual effect is that the bad habit disappears. There is a positive disinclina-

tion for it and bias against it. For instance, the cigarette smoker does not care to smoke cigarettes

Now, if the Suggestion or Assertion by another undoubtedly has this influence, why should not Suggestion or Assertion by oneself have it also? The advantage of Self-suggestion or Assertion over Suggestion or Assertion by another is obvious It is a free process within the self, it is not dependent on another There is all the difference between the two processes that there is between the kingdom of heaven in the clouds and the kingdom of heaven within.

Again, one receives a telegram with good news. It matters not an atom whether the news be true or false, it is sufficient that the telegram comes and is believed. Why should not one send a telegram to oneself—a mental telegram—just at the time when one's under-mind is most apt to believe—that is to say, just before sleep?

The theory is set forth in T. J Hudson's book on *Psychic Phenomena* One cannot agree with it altogether He seems to me to confuse the under-mind and the over-mind Still, as a dogmatic statement of some of the truth, the book is worth studying The gist of it is that the under-mind is amenable to Suggestion (I prefer the word Assertion), that it does not reason, but carries out commands and works out suggested or asserted ideas to their conclusion Mr Hudson maintains that this under-mind regulates many of the pro-

cesses of the body, especially those of digestion and excretion.

A few rules with regard to the art will be offered here. I have a special book in preparation which will deal with the subject more fully.

1. There must be no Suggestions or Assertions against the true welfare of others, neither must there be any against the true welfare of oneself.

The Suggestions or Assertions must be, preferably, of good things, not of bad For example, rather than say, "I am giving up worry," it is better to say, "I am becoming more and more easy-minded"

2 The Suggestions or Assertions must be unobtrusive. They must be made without annoyance to others; they must not be made priggishly.

3. They must be made with quiet confidence, just as one posts a letter and expects it to reach its destination as a matter of course One should make the Suggestion or Assertion calmly, taking it for granted that it will be carried out by the under-mind One should not, as it were, plant seeds and then pull them up to see whether they are growing One should plant them and water them, with expectation, and perhaps with repetition; but one should not demand sudden results in every case. One should remember the spirit of two great New Testament sayings—"Whatever you want, when you pray for it, believe that you have already received it," and "Pray with thanksgiving" The second seems to me to

be a very strong phrase to express praying with faith and realisation

There must be here, as everywhere, respect for individuality. Make a list of your needs, so that you do not ask for a number of things that you already have, or that you do not really desire

There must be individuality, also, in the form which you choose Personally I prefer the form, "I am becoming so and so" It is stronger than the form, "I want to become so and so," which connotes weakness Even "I will become" is weak On the other hand, "I am so and so already" is, for many, against reason, against the evidence of the sensations and actual observation It is the only form allowed by Christian Science, but it does not appeal to the millions My favourite form is a compromise. There seems to me to be nothing weak about it, nothing against reason

A most useful form of Self-suggestion or Assertion is Pre-suggestion or Pre-assertion Before one studies a subject, one can say to oneself, "I am concentrating thoroughly on this subject" This gives, as it were, a start to the will It enforces the will, it serves as a sort of natural stimulus A more elaborate form, which each should word in his own way, is—"This one thing I do now with all my heart, but without forgetting 'first' things" Such a form of Self-suggestion or Assertion can precede the exercises which are offered in this book

So much for positive Suggestions or Assert-

The negative kind must not be omitted altogether. When undesirable thoughts intrude, they may be treated quietly with some such words as, "Out you go there is no place for you!"

It does not matter whether the wording is slangy or not. It is essential that the wording should be genuine, and therefore individual. Nine-tenths of the wording laid down by Christian Scientists and Mental Scientists is inappropriate to the individual, it is not the phrasing that he would use for himself. Every one, therefore, should reword his own Suggestions or Assertions, being bound by no laws laid down by others He wants the wording that will convey the meaning and help him to *realise* it He may use one set of words one day, another set another day There need be no "vain repetitions." There need be none of what Emerson calls "foolish consistency" The aim is to realise a better state of affairs than that which appeals to the senses It is better to use vivid and living phrases, however vulgar —for instance, to call the undesirable thoughts "dirty little beasts," and to compare them with wretched little imps who are spoiling the furniture of one's mind and whom in real life one would turn out unceremoniously—than to use dignified and pompous but unfelt language about these thoughts.

Here, as everywhere, the supreme criterion is the all-round result As the practice is private, it does not much matter whether the word is in the choicest classical language or not.

Professor James gives a useful warning with regard to all such practices He says—

"*A third maxim may be added to the preceding pair, seize the very first possible opportunity to act on every resolution you make, and on every emotional prompting you may experience in the direction of the habits you aspire to gain* It is not in the moment of their forming, but in the moment of their producing motor effects, that resolves and aspirations communicate the new 'set' to the brain

"No matter how full a reservoir of maxims one may possess, and no matter how good one's sentiments may be, if one have not taken advantage of every concrete opportunity to act, one's character may remain entirely unaffected for the better With good intentions hell proverbially is paved This is an obvious consequence of the principles I have laid down A 'character,' as J S Mill says, 'is a completely fashioned will,' and a will, in the sense in which he means it, is an aggregate of tendencies to act in a firm and prompt and definite way upon all the principal emergencies of life A tendency to act only becomes effectively ingrained in us in proportion to the uninterrupted frequency with which the actions actually occur, and the brain 'grows' to their use.

"When a resolve or a fine glow of feeling is allowed to evaporate without bearing practical fruit, it is worse than a chance lost, it works so as positively to hinder future resolutions and emotions from taking the normal path of discharge

XXIX

DIAGRAMS

A WELL-KNOWN writer on concentration illustrates the meaning of the word by a diagram of a point like the point of a pencil In the light of the section on what concentration is, we see that such diagrams are misleading. For in concentration, except on the highest things and ideas, there should be a sort of sub-conscious attention to these highest things all the time. In other words, every true concentration, unless on the highest things, such as kindness and wisdom, should be twofold, touch never being lost with the highest. Nevertheless these diagrams have the advantage of bringing an important part of the truth before the reader. Similarly, in a book on *How to Remember*, I have illustrated one or two "Systems" by special drawings, without which the descriptions would not be sufficiently clear So each should make his own diagrams, to bring the right ideas vividly before his mind. Here is an example—

~~Undesirable things— ill-health, misery, harm to others, wrong thoughts,~~	Self	Desirable things— health, happiness, helpfulness, therefore, ways to health, etc.

This leaves only—

Self—and Desirable things—which are
(i) immediate and near—
e g. success in some examination—
success in some athletic competition—
(ii) ultimate—*i e* the ideal—
to be a gentleman-citizen of the world

Henry Wood, in a book called *Ideal Suggestion through Mental Photography*, gives a number of diagrams of printed words I do not like the wording of these diagrams, and, indeed, I doubt whether anyone else's diagram will suit you. You must make your own diagram—it may be of words, it may be of symbols But some sort of diagram is almost sure to be necessary, even if you destroy it immediately you have made it Geography without maps would be dead information Advertisements call in the aid of diagrams, indeed, many advertisements are perfectly worthless without their diagrams. We do not use diagrams nearly enough in our daily life They are among the greatest helps towards concentration They appeal to the eye where mere words fail to do so

These diagrams, however, need not be hung about over the room There is no need for priggish obtrusiveness It is better to make them, then to get them into one's head (into one's mind's eye), and then to destroy them

That is a good example of the way to make external conditions internal to realise them with concentration, then to become independent of them, because one now has them within oneself

XXX

IMAGINATION

OF late years imagination has been cleared of the old-time reproach that it was mere castle-building in the air The imagination has in it the seed of the castle, at first the castle is in the air or æther; eventually it should materialise on the ground and up towards the sky. Imagination is the matrix of reality

In itself, it is a good thing, if it be followed by action, and, of course, if it be in itself of a pure and useful kind

Sir Benjamin Brodie thoroughly realised its importance, when he described it as "that wondrous faculty, which, left to ramble uncontrolled, leads us astray into a wilderness of perplexities and errors, a land of mists and shadows, but which, properly controlled by experience and reflection, becomes the noblest attribute of man, the source of poetic genius, the instrument of discovery in science, without the aid of which Newton would never have invented fluxions, nor Davy have decomposed the earths and alkalies, nor Columbus have found another continent"

Much of the value of imagination depends on its vividness, as well as on its purity In order to have vivid imagination one must have vivid memories, one must have a mind stored with real

sense-impressions. As an example, take the first few stanzas of Gray's *Elegy*—

"The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me"

In this stanza, which illustrates the imagination of the poet, it is hard for many people to realise the picture and the sounds Whether they realise the stanza or not, depends largely on whether they have certain sense-memories stored in their mind. These, in turn, depend largely on whether they attended or not when they were receiving the sense-impressions Did they attend when they heard bells ringing, when they saw cattle moving slowly, when they heard cattle lowing? If they did, then probably they can realise the stanza.

If you cannot realise it, the fault rests chiefly in the past There was a want of attention and want of concentration. You saw things without digesting and assimilating what you saw You did not make the picture your own

It therefore follows that the first step towards training the imagination is to observe the realities of life, to recall them immediately and then at intervals afterwards, and to establish them in the memory

Out of these impressions of realities, you can make up your imagination, altering the realities or the memories of them to form new pictures

In order to observe and realise, train your senses, train all your senses

For example, when you have eaten something pleasant, recall the taste of it, so that you can eat in imagination what you like eating in reality Can you, at the present moment, taste an apple? Pause for a moment and try If you cannot, then the next time you eat an apple, concentrate, so as to realise the taste, and to have it in your memory ready to be re-created by your imagination.

Or walk a few steps, then sit still and recall the movement of walking, imagining yourself to be walking, but do not move a muscle. In order to do this, you must walk with concentration, you must realise the sensations connected with every movement By these means you will be able to imagine yourself to be taking exercise, and so to take exercise in a gentle way, even while you do not actually move your muscles For Professor Mosso and Dr W G Anderson have established beyond doubt that to imagine a movement is to perform it gently

As another example, try to imagine that you are drawing your fingers from above your forehead, over your head. that is to say, that you are stroking your head upwards. Can you imagine this sensation? If not, then stroke yourself thus a few times Now try to recall the sensation If you cannot, it will be because you did not concentrate your mind enough upon the sensation at the time

Daily we should imagine and concentrate our attention on, and realise, not only the things of daily life, but also our ideals That was one reason why the Athenian citizens surrounded themselves with beautiful things It was that they might concentrate on these beautiful things and realise them, and make them parts of themselves.

Imagination—imagination wedded to concentration—is the mother of reality

This being so, it is absolutely essential to do what scarcely anyone does, that is, to choose carefully the things on which one will concentrate For to just the same extent that a pure and useful imagination is the mother of a pure and useful thing, an impure and harmful imagination is the mother of an impure and harmful thing To train the senses indiscriminately may be as great a curse as a blessing, for, as imagination is effective when you apply it in a good direction—*e g* when you imagine yourself to be helping others—so it is fatal in a bad direction when you imagine yourself to be hurting others

Indeed, it would be better to decide on the direction of imagination before one cultivates the senses too assiduously

These hints are not unpractical or cranky, they are pre-eminently practical Every kind of control can be rendered easy by imagination It is imaginations that are among our greatest difficulties —imaginations of unpleasant things or undesirable things. Each has his own, each knows best what

his own are The cultivation of the opposite ones should be among the greatest helps towards right living.

Store the memory with desirable imaginations until they utterly exclude the undesirable. This should have been done years ago. But it is never too late to realise

An American writer calls attention to the lack of training in imagination to-day in schools. He says—"In what school to-day are classes formed for the education of the power of observation? Where is scientific attention given to the cultivation of the imagination? What college schedules any definite number of hours for the strengthening and training of the memory? Probably nowhere in the world are there any specific efforts made to increase and train the power of the Will"

And another American writer gives his experiences to show that the training of the imagination would not be waste of time Everyone wants to realise his desires, hardly anyone tries methodically to realise them in the imagination. These words from Floyd Wilson will aptly close this section by emphasing the importance of such training—

"In my work, studies, and experiments, I feel I have proved that the holding of a specific mental image, representing in itself the ideal one was reaching for, is the primary discipline to bring to himself the accomplishment of the end desired. This imaging, however, often takes shape in the mentality through day-dreams and longings, with-

out serious thought of attainment. The difficulty of day-dreams is that we put the image to which we would attain too far into the future—in a sort of indefinite time which exists somewhere out in fairyland.

"I have proved this imaging to be a potent factor to help one to his desires over and over again Sometimes by the suggestion of an image, and then quietly permitting its form to sink into sub-consciousness, it will be found to be faithfully held there To bring a man realisation in whatever line of work he is following, he should draw this mental image perfect, and during his first wakeful moments each morning look at it, and as he gazes upon it, not consider it as something to come to him in an indefinite future, but an ideal that is just waiting his grasp, as he steps outside of a mental enclosure over which he is just breaking by right thinking. Let him draw himself toward the image, recognising that it is a reflection of his true self. By so doing he is binding his conscious personality to his own spiritual or ideal self The oftener he does this in his leisure moments, the quicker and more firmly will this ideal be absorbed and be made of his own self a part By this very act he is appropriating the spiritual treasures that belong to him, and bringing them into outward expression.

"The professional grumbler is creating in his sub-consciousness mental images which are distasteful to his nobler selfhood; he is giving these

mental images firmness and power to take form in his own consciousness and produce the disagreeable traits.

"We grow to our ideals by first conceiving them. As images they may be somewhat shadowy and indistinct at first. Gradually, as we look at these mental pictures over and over again, we get them into perfect shape and form, until they reflect the ideal of what we would be, and what we wish to be"

XXXI

INTERESTING BEGINNINGS

ONE of the most conspicuous characteristics of the teaching of Jesus Christ was the way in which he interested his hearers at the start. From the comparisons with which he explained his subject, we can almost at once picture the classes of people to whom he was speaking—fishermen, money-lenders, soldiers, and so on

In essay-writing and article-writing, the beginning is of the most supreme importance It must attract the reader. And even before the beginning of the essay or the article comes the title. The title of an article or book has an enormous influence on the sale It is surprising how a book with a bad title will fail, while a book with inferior contents and a good title will succeed. The beginning here must be interesting

So also in food. At banquets there is an attractive taste at the start, to whet the appetite. This consists generally of the *hors-d'œuvre* It is not intended to feed the body, but to make an interesting beginning and to arouse the desire for food and increase the power of digestion

So, with the study and practice of concentration, there must be interesting beginnings Either the beginnings must be interesting in themselves, or they must be interesting because they help the person to realise his desires.

The schoolboy, for example, may like to begin his concentration when he is at play, because he is interested in his play If he proceeds to concentrate on practice for play, if, let us say, he concentrates on the practice of the positions of the feet in cricket, then he has a beginning which is interesting for another reason—interesting not so much in itself as because the practice will help him to succeed in games.

Whether a beginning is interesting or not, depends largely on the individual There is scarcely anything which is interesting to everyone alike. What attracts one man, bores another A cricket-bat may be the starting point of concentration for a schoolboy, it would be a very bad beginning for an old maid A conversation about a neighbour, or knitting, or a cat might be an easy beginning for an old maid, a very hard beginning for a schoolboy

There are two kinds of interesting beginnings.

Either the beginnings are interesting to one naturally, or they are interesting because of their supposed results.

After getting the power of concentration by interesting beginnings, one should then extend that power to other tasks which are less interesting.

How the power is gained matters less than one is inclined to think. It matters most how the power, when gained, is applied.

The following sections will suggest simple beginnings of practice. Some are easy, some are interesting. Some are neither easy nor interesting. Some are hard and dull to-day, yet after a year of practice may be easy, and perhaps interesting. Practice will work wonders.

There must not be too much strain on the attention at first, there must be some attractiveness in the subject. The aim, however, must be the power to concentrate on a subject at will, even if it is uninteresting in itself and apparently leads to no particular advantages

XXXII

EASY BEGINNINGS IN DAILY LIFE

AS an example of a beginning which is not by any means easy, and yet is a beginning in daily life, I start with a quotation from an American writer—

"It does not make any difference what you are or what you do, you can cultivate this memory-centre when you are doing your work. It will not take one single minute of your time. Only pay attention, that is all. Do this, and your memory will improve

"Pay attention to motion, force, resistance, pressure, velocity, momentum, speed, weight, balance, gravitation, attraction, currents, motion of ships, motion of animals, motion of trains, motion of heavenly planets, motion of the air, motion of water, motion of yourself, motion of vehicles. Measure, apply, adjust, direct, estimate, and teach that which relates to motion. Talk about weights, pressure, ponderosity, poise, speed, equilibria, etc. Take a course in mechanics, dynamics, statics, kinematics, physics, hydraulics, hydrostatics, electro-dynamics, and other sciences that treat of motion, force, and pressure Or read about these sciences in books, or, better still, pay attention to motion and force in everyday life. You can study motion wherever you are, in your home, on the sea, on the train, on the streets, in your work There is motion everywhere. Here also, it will not take a single minute of your time, nor will it cost one cent. Pay attention to such conditions in Nature and you will develop your memory. It is the only way that memory can be trained You must develop your own memory, or your memory will remain poor."

Such a plan is far too complex at the start,

even the following, from another American writer, is a little difficult —

"Select an object for attention, in the room, or out-of-doors—say a chair or a tree. Gaze at this object attentively, persistently, steadily Do not strain the eyes, use them naturally Now note the object's size. Estimate this. Observe its distance from yourself, and from other objects around it. Note its shape. Determine how it differs in shape from other things near it Clearly note its colour. Does it in this harmonise with its surroundings? If so, how? If not, in what respect? Make out its material How was it made? What is its true purpose? Is it serving that purpose? Could it in any way be improved? How might this improvement be brought about?

"In seeking the above information, hold the mind rigidly to its task It will be hard at first; but persistence in the exercise will ultimately secure ease and swiftness"

As a simpler exercise, which does not take one out of the work of daily life and can be practised anywhere, study one of your hands Notice its size, shape, and outline, its shading, and so forth Keep your hand still, but not rigid. When you can attend to your hand for five minutes, you have advanced some way on the path towards concentration

Do not think that the study is an unpractical one When you can focus your mind upon your hand, you can divert your mind from any other

part of your body, and beyond any doubt, you can help to keep your hand warm in the winter For to focus your mind on it will send more blood to it and raise its temperature

I believe that, when one is training any part, and especially one's hand, to do its work accurately, it is well to watch it and attend to it Certainly I have found that in practising foot-movements for games, or for boxing or fencing, it was essential to watch the feet at first, until they performed their work correctly and freely. Then was the time to divert the attention from them to the wrist, for example, or to the spot at which one was aiming.

Another easy beginning in daily life is when one is eating One can attend to the tastes of the different foods, and can discriminate between the different tastes For example, in a salad one can distinguish the taste of the lettuce from that of the cucumber This is an easy task. A further stage is to distinguish, in the case of pepper, the taste of the pepper from the irritation which it causes. We are apt to receive only general impressions of our meals; it is as well to be able to split up our general impression into several distinct and separate impressions.

Another easy beginning is in the train, when one can study people and advertisements. It may not be very interesting at first, but it is easy and requires no special apparatus

Then, again, when one is brushing one's hair or

washing, one can attend to the act and realise the sensation as well as the movement.

Such beginnings use opportunities which are bound to occur. Most people waste a great deal of their time by not using such opportunities They do the daily things casually and badly. They had much better learn to attend, if only for the sake of gaining the power of concentration For it is not a great step from being able to concentrate one's attention on the brushing of one's hair to the exclusion of all other thoughts, to being able to concentrate one's attention on any subject or object at will

A rather more elaborate beginning might be the following, which is suggested by Rocine —

"Dip a towel in cold water, wring it out and wash your body with it, one part at a time, and wipe it perfectly dry; then rub the part with your hands in all directions. Grasp the skin with your hand and manipulate it vigorously. Wash and rub part after part, until you have washed, dried, rubbed, and manipulated every part of your body. Then massage your stomach with the tips of your fingers, and press your finger-tips far into the abdomen, in all parts of the same, especially should you press your finger-tips in under the breast-bone, for in so doing you exercise the liver. Then take a breath and clench your fists gradually, still holding the air, and exert your power SLOWLY until you almost tremble with energy, and, in so doing, centre your mind on the stomach

and send your vital forces to the digestive organs; slow up very gradually Do this four times Then move the stomach in an inward and outward direction by its own force, breathe deeply a few times, oil your stomach and chest with olive oil Then dress yourself"

Attend thoroughly, as if there were nothing else to be done in the world The exercise itself will conduce towards health and a feeling of freshness

XXXIII

OTHER EASY BEGINNINGS

ALREADY I have suggested some beginnings which were interesting, though not necessarily in the daily routine, then some beginnings which were perhaps not interesting, but were, or could easily be, in the daily routine These beginnings were not, perhaps, interesting in themselves, but could have interest attached to them, because of the advantages of the practice. A man who did not care to attend to the brushing of his hair might attend to it when he realised that the practice would give him better concentrating power, and hence greater success in achieving his ambitions

Another means of helping the attention would be Pre-suggestion or Pre-assertion, for example

the use of such a formula as this, "One thing I do now," or the more elaborate formula suggested in a previous section.

I now come to other easy beginnings which are not necessarily interesting in themselves nor a part of the daily routine Professor James gives some excellent advice as to the practice of such little things He says—

"The great thing in all education is to make our nervous system our ally instead of our enemy.

"For this, we must make automatic and habitual, as early as possible, as many useful actions as we can, and as carefully guard against growing into ways that are likely to be disadvantageous

"In the acquisition of a new habit, or the leaving off of an old one, we must take care to launch ourselves with as strong and decided an initiative as possible

"Never suffer an exception to occur till the new habit is securely rooted in your life.

"Seize the very first possible opportunity to act on every resolution you make, and on every emotional prompting you may experience in the direction of the habits you aspire to gain"

Each reader can choose his own subject in the following exercise, which will be seen to be an advance on the above studies One must not allow the attention to wander from the object to anything connected with the object. One must keep the mind on the object itself, not on any of its causes or accompaniments or results.

"When the mind is a blank, hold it down for a few seconds. Then instantly begin to think of some one thing, and now exclude every other thought Keep the attention rigidly upon this particular subject as long as possible The direction does not mean that you are to follow a train of ideas upon the subject, but that you are to fasten the mind keenly upon the one thing or idea, and retain it in the field of attention, just as you may look at some object, focussing sight and observation there, and there alone"

Other easy beginnings, which usually are not (but easily can be) interesting and parts of the daily routine are described by Haddock in his *Power of Will*, and by Vivekânanda in his *Raja Yoga* This is from the latter—

"Sit in a straight posture, and the first thing to do is to send a current of holy thought to all creation, mentally repeat 'Let all things be happy, let all things be peaceful; let all being be blissful' So do the east, south, north, and west. The more you do that, the better you will feel yourself. You will find at last that the easiest way to make yourselves healthy is to see that others are healthy, and the easiest way to make yourselves happy is to see that others are happy. After doing that, those who believe in God should pray—not for money, not for health, nor for heaven; pray for knowledge and light, every other prayer is selfish Then the next thing to do is to think of your own body, and see

that it is strong and healthy; it is the best instrument you have Think of it as being as strong as adamant, and that with the help of this body you will cross this ocean of life. Freedom is never to be reached by the weak, throw away all weakness, tell your body that it is strong; tell your mind that it is strong, and have unbounded faith and hope in yourself"

One which is less obviously helpful is to take a stanza of poetry, say from Gray's *Elegy*, and realise it, imagining the sights and sounds and smells, etc, which it describes. Take plenty of time over the stanza. The next day, go through this stanza again before you proceed to the new one, do not hurry. The secret of success in practice is to avoid hurry; to do one little thing thoroughly and leisurely without any regard for time, without any regard for what is to come next; to do it as if everything would wait until one had done it, as if there were nothing else in the world and never would be, to do it leisurely and thoroughly.

Daily also, as Professor James advises, one should perform some exercise which seems unnecessary from the point of view of physical training From the point of view of mental training, it develops the habit of performing an action thoroughly and with attention without any hope of reward, and without any interest in the action itself for the sake of its advantages

These little beginnings lead to great results, not

because they are supremely difficult nor because they take up much time, but rather because they are so numerous that by their sheer weight of numbers they can alter the character and give self-control Every one of these practices is an heroic act. Every one of them is worth attention. He who has continued them for a year is at the end of that year a man who is more and more master of himself, and, therefore, of his surroundings and of others

XXXIV

READING AND LISTENING

A GREAT deal of the reading done to-day, in fact more of it than ever before, is fruitless As with trees, so with men, the soil is not prepared and the seeds are not watered. There is too little patience, too little perseverance And the root of the matter lies in this—that people read the wrong things, and even these things they read in the wrong way They would do far better if, first of all, they went through a course of lessons in the art of reading, and then were given a *few* books to read and to *master*

When I was lecturing at Cambridge I made an innovation. Often, instead of beginning with my lecture, I asked my pupils to write down their ideas on the subject of the lecture It seems to

me that this is what anyone should do before he listens to a lecture or reads a book or article; otherwise his mind is not ready for the ideas It is much better that he should prepare the ground before him

After choosing the book carefully, and prophesying its contents, probably the best plan for most people is to read through the book quickly and lightly, so as to get a bird's-eye view of it

With regard to the choice of the book, at first it may be well for the individual to begin on a subject that is interesting to him, by degrees he should train himself to read any book, and to master its contents, whether they be interesting or not. *I know that this is against the advice of* most American writers, but that is where the Americans are weak, they have very little power of doing a thing in which they are not interested —by this I mean, interested obviously; for many of the things that they omit to read would benefit and interest them in the end.

Having perused the book, repeat to yourself, or write down on paper, its general ideas Try how many of them you can remember. Then refer to the book and correct by it, until you get a more or less complete outline in your own mind.

Then study it part by part, in the way which I shall suggest in a later section.

Haddock has some very useful hints on this, as on most subjects of education. His words are worth quoting in full—

"Your mind has now wandered. Go back and read the sentence again, giving it exclusive attention; then state in mental words its thought, holding yourself to complete absorption in the matter

"Continue this exercise until you can confine the mind to that thought with not the shadow of another idea. Then proceed with further reading in exactly the same way You will not make much progress at the start. Your habit is of long standing, and it will require great patience and perseverance to destroy it But the thing can certainly be done Remember! For what are you reading at all? Really to read—genuinely to think. Here are goals which are worth untiring labour and unlimited time. A page a day which the mind bores its way into is better than a book read carelessly in one hour.

"When about to read, ask yourself, 'Why am I to read this matter?' Find that out; then insist upon getting what you are after. Read the first sentence, and ask, 'What did that sentence mean to say?' Read the sentence until you know and can tell the fact or truth in your own words Proceed thus to the close of the first paragraph, and ask, 'Exactly what does this paragraph declare?' Persist in reading the same paragraph until you can relate its thought. Continue these exercises to the complete mastery of thoughtful reading You will find your mind-wandering slowly vanishing

"While engaged in business or other matters,

pause frequently to note what you are thinking about You will meet with many surprises. Catch yourself indulging some train of fancy, and then ask, 'Has this any value to me? Am I thinking out the matter in which I am physically engaged, or on which I set out, or am I merely running about in it like a puppy in a new field?' Keep the mind upon thoughts of value They need not relate to death and the judgment, pleasant thoughts are not unlawful"

The way of reading a book or article is very like the way of seeing a picture. Get the general impression, then study the parts.

Finally, combine the general impression with the particular impression of each part, that is to say, see the picture as a whole, and yet as a collection of details

As a few examples of books that may be worth studying in this way, I would suggest the following Those marked with an asterisk are published in America —

Sir Edwin Arnold's *The Light Celestial.*
Buckle's *History of Civilisation.*
M. C's *Light on the Path*
* Haddock's *Power of Will*
* Halleck's *New Psychology*
* Hudson's *Psychic Phenomena*
* Ingalese's *History and Power of Mind.*
* James' *Talks to Teachers on Psychology.*
Vivekânanda's *Râja Yoga*

In case anyone should care to study any of my

own books, I would select, *How to Prepare Essays, etc How to Remember without Memory Systems and with them A Simple Prayer and Creed*

XXXV

REPETITIONS

THE value of repetition has hardly been realised in America, where the tendency is to rush always to some new thing Here and there, however, we find an authority who knows what repetition can effect For example, Professor James says—"Everywhere the function of the effort is the same—to keep affirming and adopting a thought which if left to itself would slip away It may be cold and flat when the spontaneous mental drift is towards excitement, or great and arduous when the spontaneous is towards repose. In the one case the effort has to inhibit an explosion, in the other to arouse an obstructed will"

It is essential for ordinary people, though not nearly so essential for the few who realise things, to keep affirming and repeating a thought; just as it is essential for the ordinary carpenter to hit the nail again and again with the hammer

Such repetition makes, as it were, a path in the mind, connecting the ideas and binding them together, so that the carriage of thought travels

easily along the beaten track. As with the muscles, so with the mind Legrange has pointed out how repetition and practice make muscular movements easier and more economical. Every cell in the body, just like every individual in the world, does a thing more and more easily through habit.

The danger, of course, is that the way may be a wrong one. Before you repeat, you must be sure that you are repeating a good thing in the right way.

Therefore, first clearly work out the right thing and the right way, find the best subjects on which to concentrate, find the best practices, those that will help you most—for example, proper breathing and the relaxing of the muscles

Then do the work correctly, This is almost sure to mean that at the start you must do it leisurely.

Then repeat the work, so as to make it easier and easier

Then, having mastered one part of the work—for it is ridiculous to attempt the whole work at once—repeat that part and add a new one in the same way as before.

Go on thus, till you have mastered the whole, part by part.

Having mastered the whole, leave it to regulate itself. For instance, as I have pointed out in a previous section, correct breathing is as a rule the combination of lower, middle, and upper breathing.

It is not three separate processes, but a single process in which analysis can distinguish three parts. Most of us should learn each part separately, and should also learn not only to inhale fully, but also to exhale fully. Eventually, he who has practised properly will find that he breathes fully and correctly without any attention to the three parts or even to the whole act

But tell a man to breathe correctly or to breathe fully, and probably he starts in the wrong way, and possibly he strains himself If you want to teach an ordinary person, you must make him learn a thing part by part, and make him repeat each part by itself until he has rendered its working almost automatic

XXXVI

REGULARITY AND THE MAKING UP OF ARREARS

THERE are two kinds of regularity, that of time and that of occasion.

Regularity of time is the only kind that appeals to most people, especially to those of a simple mind Time is ready-made for them by the clock. This regularity is of great importance, considering how our life is regulated it is regulated not by Nature, not by the rising and setting of the sun, not by natural fatigue, but almost entirely by arti-

ficial limits, by the working of a pitiless watch This being so, we must learn regularity according to the watch

An American author gives the following advice — "Determine every day, until it is unnecessary, that you will call to mind at a certain exact hour some particular matter to which you will attend, keeping the same hour for many days, then changing the hour Continue until you are master in this respect. This will build up a habit of obeying your own orders."

But, as with many bodily functions, so with all physical or mental practices, this regularity of time may be inconvenient This is noticeably the *case in respect of rising and washing, and per-*forming other daily functions in the morning It is important not to be absolutely dependent upon regularity of time

Regularity of occasion comes in here Every day one wakes at some time or other, it is easier to depend on this act of waking than on a special time Make a list of regular occasions, and determine to use them for practice of or for concentration.

When you wake, suggest or assert to yourself, perhaps along the lines laid down in the previous section At that time you may, also, massage yourself, as I recommend my Health-pupils to do, with a view to helping the excretion

When you go out, you can inhale one or two deep breaths through the nostrils. The mere

act of going out should remind you of this practice.

While you are waiting, you can either observe things—impress them upon your mind and then recall them—or you can practise Self-suggestion or Assertion; or you can do the breathing-exercises None of these habits need be at all ostentatious.

When you come into a house and when you leave it, you can send thoughts of goodwill to all who are in it

At intervals during the day, you can, in a mild way, stretch and relax

When you go to bed, you can again practise breathing and Self-suggestion or Assertion

These are only a few hints Each should make out his own scheme, by which he can use odd moments with regularity

Suppose, however, that there is an omission Suppose that an occasion has gone by without the practice What is to be done then? I think the best plan is to make use of holidays and Sundays for restoring the upset balance If you have omitted any training—for instance, the exercises of physical culture—Sunday may be the best day for making up the arrears

This plan of making up the arrears tends to self-respect It is obvious that the Deity, in so far as the Deity's ideas appear in the Bible, did not expect men to be perfect Every allowance was made for faults It seems to me that one of the

greatest of all ordinances was the setting apart of a certain time, not necessarily for rest, but for restoring upset balances If we used this time regularly for making up arrears, we should very soon get back our self-respect and be able, as it were, to look ourselves in the face again.

XXXVII

TIMELINESS

THERE is an old saying, "In time of peace prepare for war." A much better saying is, "In time of peace prepare for victory." In time of health, one might add, prepare to prevent illness—to render it impossible!

In mental training, Professor James insists on a similar plan. He says, "Get a good store of sense impressions early." He means early in life, it is equally important to get them early before temptation comes An Irish doctor was once consulted with regard to the right way of dealing with undesirable ideas and imaginations A patient asked this doctor the best way to cure these. The doctor said, "Out with them before ever they come in" That is the plan of timeliness—to anticipate difficulties.

It is the custom of English people to muddle along anyhow until the crisis comes, and then, with a strange genius possessed by no other

nation, to "bungle through somehow." We see this lateness and laziness, this apathy, in England's treatment of her army, her food-supplies, her health, her children. In these and in many other examples there is almost utter neglect until it seems too late.

This being a national failing, it becomes all the more a duty for each individual to practise the opposite virtue

The essence of timeliness is to see far ahead. Only he can regulate the immediate present who realises the distant future

In my own personal experience with games I have found that it is vital to practise for months and months, before any mechanism can become a habit. Now and then I have practised a few weeks before the event, and have managed to play well enough in the new way during an ordinary game, but in an exciting match I have found that the newly-acquired stroke probably disappears I believe this applies to all kinds of games

Certainly it is true that in games people play too much and practise too little Had they practised when they were young, and when practice was not such a nuisance, they would be playing better and enjoying the play more Now they say that practice is "not worth while"

One must start early in life or, failing that, one must start now, and with the things that are ready to hand and are not beyond one's will-power

Begin now, therefore, and resolve that you will master anything that is worth mastering, as suggested in this book. Then read this book quickly and put into practice at once as many of the ideas as you can manage.

Nine-tenths of our resolutions are worse than useless because we do not follow them up with appropriate actions There must be this second kind of timeliness, namely, the habit of turning good ideas into resolutions, and resolutions into actions. Probably the best opportunity will be during the next meal that you take. During this meal make up your mind to attend to the tastes of the food, and therefore to eat more leisurely

Timeliness, I must repeat, is not an English virtue, and for that reason it is important that every English man and woman should cultivate especially the habit of timeliness. As a nation we are too content to rely on our strong points without troubling to bring our weak points up to the level of our strong.

XXXVIII

PATIENCE

MANY tens of thousands of people in England have bought exercisers or other gymnastic apparatus, together with a chart for the use of the same Possibly all except a small percentage have

given up the regular practice, at least in private They have lacked patience.

This is not the only reason for failure. It is quite certain that the average "developer" is a bad thing for most people, that it is wrongly used by most people, because it is used to excess at the start, that too much is expected from it, because too much is advertised and promised by the proprietors of it, too much is expected in a short time Even if it were a fine apparatus, which usually it is not, even then it would soon be given up because of the common lack of patience.

In mental practices there need be less failure than in physical, for mental practices are possible where physical practices are almost impossible There are thousands of occasions during the day when an ordinary physical exercise would be ridiculous, whereas a mental exercise would not be noticed

And there is this very important consideration We believe that every right mental step counts, whether the results appear now or not, that no right thought can possibly be wasted, that every right thought is registered, and has a certain effect

It may be objected that there is no proof of this We may live to see material proof of it, until then, we can only believe that it is so—that every thought counts, whether in this life or in a future life

If you are not inclined to believe this, yet at any rate realise that what is important is not so much the result as, the desire followed by the

practice and perseverance, and the effect upon character. That is the vital thing.

In order to get and keep patience, understand something about the brain-cells and the connecting fibres Understand that it takes a long while to build a new house, and a still longer time to build a new town or country, that it takes a long time to connect house with house, and country with country, that the brain is a kingdom, or rather an empire, made up of houses and towns and countries, that just as one would not expect Rome to be built in a day, or the Roman Empire to be conquered and organised and connected up in a day, so one must not expect one's brain to be re-built in a day

Be patient, then Take stock of yourself at fair and not too short intervals Do not take too careful a stock every night often, before good results can come, there must be an apparently backward movement It has been so throughout history, it is so in almost all cases of physical cure. Scarcely any cure by diet, water, exercise, or even mental means, is pleasant or effective at the start, almost invariably there is discomfort, if not pain and a feeling of utter failure, when the cure is really beginning.

Have patience in another way also Do not hurry into the wrong practice Be patient, not only when you have begun, but also before you have begun It is essential that you should not rush into a habit rashly. Plan out your way sensibly before you begin

XXXIX

ORDER AND ARRANGEMENT

A MAN who seems always in a hurry is almost sure to be a man who has arranged his affairs unscientifically, and a man who finds it hard to master a subject is almost sure to be a man who has studied this subject unmethodically An enormous amount of trouble is saved by proper arrangement in good time.

As an example, I quote some "rules of success" offered by an American author. He says—

"Success does not take care of itself. It depends upon the following conditions —

1 Hereditary environments
2. Physical and Mental growth
3 Vital culture
4. Development of weak faculties.
5 Physical culture exercise.
6 Education, both general and special
7 Religious culture
8 Social culture
9 Magnetic culture
10 Capital
11 Reputation, mutual assistance of prominent people
12 Special talent.
13. Selection of that work for which the person is suited.

14 Concentration of efforts
15 Self-confidence.
16 Memory-culture"

Study this list, and note how unscientifically it is arranged. Now connect together the headings which ought to be connected together or fused into one.

I think you will agree that the following should be connected together —1 with 10, 2 with 3 and 9, 3 with 2 and 5 and 9, 4 with 6, 9 with 3, 10 with 1, 16 with 4 and 6

Or take another quotation from the same author, who, later in his book, gives a more elaborate scheme of success:—

"The secrets of success are comprehended in the following important rules —

1 Begin with that for which you have talent.
2. Centralise your energies.
3. Take excellent care of your health.
4. Save your money
5 Prepare for opportunities
6 Improve your vitality.
7 Develop habits of industry and money-making.
8 Work for noble ends.
9. Develop social magnetism
10 Conserve your sexual powers.
11 Develop confidence in your own abilities.
12. Develop an optimistic state of mind Expect success, talk success

13 Never quarrel with the people.
14 Be honest in your dealings with the people, and the people will patronise you
15 Never associate too much with unimportant people.
16 Do your business with the people and let the people attend to their business Never permit idlers in your office, nor in your store, nor around yourself
17 Associate with cultured people
18. Act unseen as much as you can. People should not know your business.
19. Educate yourself for your work
20. Do good work for those for whom you work
21 Create a demand for your goods.
22 Stay out of overcrowded fields of industry.
23. Go into new industries and popular fields Handle such goods that are in demand.
24 Study industries and industrial statistics.
25 Manufacture, handle or sell that which the people need.
26. Select partners, servants, helpers, lawyers, wife, or husband as the case may be, who can increase

your business, who can help you in your industry.

27. Study production and consumption
28. Seek good business advice.
29. Study the past experience of successful people.
30 Study causes of failure and causes of success
31. Agree with the people The secret of success is to agree with the people, but this does not mean that you should make yourself common and familiar
32. Never tell people a single word about your business, keep everything to yourself If you talk about your business to friend and foe, your business affairs will be known, and this will very likely defeat you
33 Do not trust people too much, watch friend and foe.
34. Do not speculate, unless you are a financial expert"

Here, again, individuals will differ as to the best possible order, but no one will approve of the arrangement made by this writer Probably you will agree to the following connections —2 with 16, 3 with 6 and 10, 4 with 7, 5 with 24, 6 with 3 and 10, 7 with 4, 8 with 26, 10 with 3 and 6, 11 with 12, 13 with 31, 15 with 17, 18 with 32, 21 with 23 and 27, 22 with 23 and 24 and 5, 24 with

5 and 22 as well as 23, 25 with 23, 26 with 8, 27 with 21 and 23, 29 with 30, 31 with 13, 32 with 18.

The original schemes would be hard to remember, not because the ideas are hard to remember, but because the disorderliness and confusion is hopeless Needless to say, the book is on the subject of mental training!

Now take these ideas and rearrange them You will find that these ideas, good for the most part, are now easy to remember.

The orderliness has helped the concentration.

Again, ninety-nine people out of a hundred fail to write an essay of a satisfactory kind. Why? Is it because they lack talent or power? Not so much that, as because they have no system. They try too much at once. In essay-writing there are different processes, as I shall explain in the next section These processes should be taken each in turn. Then the task of essay-writing soon becomes easy Otherwise there cannot be concentration on essay-writing. There can only be a very laborious and unsuccessful form of dissipation of the attention.

So it is in business One man cannot get through his work Another man, with an even larger business, arranges his work in logical order. He saves time thus Moreover, he delegates much of his work. The result is that, instead of being always in a hurry and producing inferior work, he seems nearly always at leisure, and certainly is well up to date and s

results. It is not so much that he concentrates more earnestly, it is that, before he concentrates, he arranges

The moral of it is to spend labour in preparing, in ordering out the plan, not to rush rashly into an ill-digested scheme, but to give a little time to making and remaking the scheme—to rehearse it in imagination before proceeding to it and through it

XL

THE "PART BY PART" SYSTEM

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, in his *Autobiography*, explains how he set himself to become virtuous He describes at length how he made a list of various virtues, and gave up a week to each, marking every day how far he had failed in the particular virtue His plan was a sound one for those who cannot easily do a thing by the light of nature. He divided up a difficult thing into comparatively easy parts, and, as the Romans did in conquering their empire, mastered each part by itself, assimilating each part before he proceeded to the next

I have described elsewhere my own experiences, not only in games, but also in essay-writing. The stroke at tennis, hopelessly bad so long as I practised it as a complete stroke, became a

different thing altogether when I divided it into its parts—foot-positions and movements, trunk-movements, arm-and-wrist movements—and then practised each part with concentration So it was with essay-writing Instead of writing an essay as a complete whole, I first collected ideas, then marked their relative importance, then arranged them, connected them, and, last of all, expressed them, concentrating on each process in turn I now find that essay-writing has become with me a twofold process Sometimes—but only very seldom—I can even write an essay in a single process

Anyhow, the result of this practice of the different parts, with concentration, has been to make the working of each part almost mecha so that, when I played games in America, se Americans congratulated me on nearly al having my feet in the right position They w hardly believe me when I told them tha correct mechanism had been a matter of pra part by part

This result, the easy and almost au working of each part after it has been prac by itself, removes the chief objection to system, which is, that its results must be jointed and stilted So far from this being case, its results are usually an unconscious, rather sub-conscious, facility.

The training in this system is not needed the genius He does the whole as a whole,

To make him practise the various parts would probably produce failure and actually deprive him of his skill.

Obviously, the "Part by Part" system is invaluable help to concentration. One of main reasons why people fail to concentrat that they take too large a field, too comp field, on which to concentrate. Whereas could easily focus their attention on an part of the field, they fail to focus their a on the whole, so that what they belie concentration is really dissipation. T spreading their thoughts over a great l stead of narrowing them down into channel.

There is another objection, which is tha tion to the parts diverts the mind fro general movement. For example, it is sa the cricketer, who thinks about the posi feet when he is batting, is likely to bat That is true. The "Part by Part" syst ever, is not a system for practice during it is a system for practice long before begins When the game begins, quite kind of concentration is needed.

Surely the very essence of business-s to analyse the whole into parts and to str the weak parts Scarcely any successful bu man has neglected this rule.

There is another advantage in the "P Part" system, too. If any part works we

smoothly, then there is no need to concentrate on that. It is on the weakest points that one should focus the attention. Systems of complete "physical culture" are ridiculous for most people, so are the systems of complete "education," if they exist anywhere, for in almost every individual case a great deal of the training must be unnecessary It is waste of time to attend to the easily and correctly functioning parts

The "Part by Part" system analyses, and then proceeds to find out what is weak and what is strong The strong it leaves alone, the weak it improves

The system is clearly a help to teachers Most teachers want their pupils to advance They tell their pupils to study, to practise, and so on This ridiculous advice has scarcely any effect It is not study and practice in general that the pupils want, it is study and practice in the points in which they are weakest By the "Part by Part" system, the teacher finds out his pupil's weakness, and tells his pupil to concentrate his mind here, until he has made that weakness a strength

XLI

THE SHORT-SPELL SYSTEM

CHILDREN need short spells of work and exercise, they need far lighter and more numerous meals than adults There are

many reasons for this, physiological as well as psychological, for example, the arteries of children as compared with the heart of children show clearly that children are not intended for prolonged effort. They can recover quickly, provided that their work or play has not been continued too long. What applies to children in years, applies equally to children in any subject, to children in respect of any faculty. Most of us are children in concentration—children, I mean, in the sense of beginners.

We ought, therefore, to treat ourselves like children at the start, and not practise too difficult things, nor practise for too long stretches at a time We should gradually increase the difficulty and the length of the practices as we advance in strength and endurance

Even when we have advanced, however, we may still find the short-spell system the best for ordinary purposes. Just as a man who runs thirty yards, then walks, then runs again, and so does his running in short spells, can cover a mile or two with less fatigue than if he had covered a quarter of a mile straight on end at the same pace, so, in work, in many subjects and in many practices we can do best by a series of sprints, as it were. This is far from a universal rule, but it is a good rule in order to avoid fatigue and boredom.

It is quite true that with some people and in some subjects long stretches are absolutely

necessary. I remember that, when I was reading Demosthenes at Cambridge, I started the day at a very slow pace, at the end of the day, thanks to continuous study, I got into the swing of the Greek, and worked at five or sometimes ten times the early pace. And there are certain physical practices, such as walking, in which the same applies And there are some individuals who seem to require to do almost everything in long stretches, it is their nature

The tests are ease and good quality of work on the one hand, or effort and bad quality of work on the other—effort during the work, and exhaustion after the work For it is one of the fatal parts of too long spells that the exhaustion need not be felt at the time, sometimes it is not felt at all until a long while after the effort Then there comes a terrible reaction

The short-spell system is best adapted for the practice of breathing and of other little things, such as imaginations and Self-suggestions or Assertions It tells, not by force and strength, but by numbers and mass It is the drop that hollows the stone, not by force, but by constantly falling.

The short-spell system has one special advantage and one special danger It has the advantage of being practice in diverting the attention from an undesirable or dull thing, it has the danger of getting a person out of the habit of persistent concentration

The short-spell system must, therefore, demand

concentrated attention during each brief task, and it must demand, as a supplementary principle, the long-spell system for certain subjects.

XLII

RECREATIONS

THERE is a school of so-called thinkers that is against games, hobbies, and any form of pleasure It has made education a dull thing. It has made an educated person an unsymmetrical man More than this, it has generally led to an outburst which more than compensates for the years of restraint It has left undeveloped, at least in the right direction, one of man's most important faculties—the faculty for play and laughter

Haddock, with all the hundreds of serious and laborious practices which he commands, quotes some very good words on the necessity of recreation, from Prentice Mulford—

"Carrying any business or study in the mind all the time, day and night, morning and evening, does not really advance that business so much as forgetting it at intervals and letting the mind rest, as you allow your muscles to rest after any physical exertion Mind allowed to rest gains new ideas and new force to carry out ideas

"What is the remedy? More recreation. More variety of occupation. More selves in our one

self To attain the highest and happiest life we need to have two, and possibly three, if not four lives in one—to be merchant in the morning, and artist or yachtsman or something else in the afternoon, and in the second life forget for the time all about the first, and in such forgetfulness rest the first life or set of faculties, recuperate them, refresh them, and go back to business, or art or science, or any occupation, next day with more force, plan, idea, thought to put in it"

Haddock urges people not to neglect and rush through the simple pleasures of life This is one of the saddest features of modern times, that few people enjoy what they do. We see the upper classes, in particular, at their banquets and picnics, looking utterly bored, though there are millions to whom such an occasion would be the greatest delight It is not only in these occasional things that enjoyment is an absolute necessity, it is also in the small acts of life, such as washing, and lying in bed About this Haddock says—

"If the bath is taken before retiring, get into a clean garment, and then sprawl over every foot of bed-linen, of a proper temperature, luxuriating, resting, conscious of being a clean and very good sort of person Now note with shut eyes what you see of colours and shapes in the inky darkness before you, and sleep"

If you cannot enjoy what you do, then find something else to enjoy—something as harmless and useful as possible

There are many who think it is ridiculous to play "Patience," to read novels, and so forth. They think it is ridiculous even to try gardening or carpentry They are quite wrong Apart from the practice of concentration, which is very easy with such hobbies, there is the rest for the mind, so that it can come back to its work with fresh power of concentration

Of course, the ideal is to have work that is also recreation I know an editor who is so happy over his work that he does not actually require a holiday His work is a holiday He enjoys it as much as he enjoys his meals But most people are settled down to, and will not move from, work which is far from a pleasure They must have recreation at all costs Otherwise their concentration will almost certainly be of a morbid sort

It requires a great deal of strength of mind either to choose the right work and perhaps be, as so many great men have been, a failure for a time, or else to insist on recreation The greatest fools are those who will not laugh There is no particular merit in gloominess, it should be regarded as a sin

In recreation, as in serious work, there is need of planning beforehand We must not rush madly into any profession or into any play If, however, we have undertaken some profession or play, if we are pledged to it, or suppose ourselves to be so, then we must make the best of these things, and

concentrate on them at the time, and improve ourselves in them.

In other words, we must choose our recreations carefully, and take them rather seriously, to the extent of practising for them, and doing ourselves justice in them, and getting the most we can out of them

XLIII

SHUTTING OFF SENSE-IMPRESSIONS

HADDOCK gives some very practical advice on the art of stopping our ears and eyes—a most useful accomplishment in a modern city. He says—

"At night, when you are disturbed by hideous noises, stop thinking about them

"Insist that you do not care, anyway

"Think of a particularly pleasant tune, or thought, or experience Do not work, take the matter easily

"Call up, mentally, a sound which is totally different from the one that disturbs you Cause it to run in the mind, taking care that it has a certain regularity and rhythm Imagine the loud ticking of a large clock, or the droning of an old-fashioned water-wheel, or the steady booming of the sea

"Remember that all thought about the hateful

sound only intensifies its power over you. To rage at a barking dog signifies one of two consequences the death of the dog (possibly of its owner), or mere nervousness on the part of the man who has no Will. . . . The senses are unspeakable marvels, yet the majority of mankind die without discovering anything like their utility. They are designed to be perfect servants of the sovereign Will . . .

"Everybody knows how acute the hearing of the blind becomes, probably, as Mr D. P. Hatfield has observed, 'not because they have any better hearing than the rest of us, but because their misfortune makes them continually cultivate their hearing, for like all of our faculties it is susceptible of very great improvement under cultivation.'"

Such advice is more easily practicable than that of the author of *Light on the Path*, a most excellent little work to those who take themselves seriously. The fault of that work is that it is too decidedly mental, and too decidedly advanced for the average person Beginners had much better try such a task as Haddock suggests, than try any such ideal as is described in *Light on the Path* or in the great Hindu epic, *The Mahâbhârata*, which speaks of —

> "The Saint who shuts outside his placid soul
> All touch of sense, letting no contact through,
> Whose quiet eyes gaze straight from fixed brows,
> Whose outward breath and inward breath are drawn
> Equal and slow through nostrils still and close"

How can we shut off our senses? The best way is, at first, to divert them If, for example, we are in a room eating, and there is an unpleasant person sitting opposite, or there is a dirty tablecloth, or an undesirable dish or taste, it is easiest to turn the attention to something else, to look at some other person, or at the flowers on the table, or to think of or substitute a pleasant taste We can divert the same sense—the eye to some other sight, the palate to some other taste, or we can use another sense.

In the case of the dog barking, for instance, if it annoys us, we can hum to ourselves and concentrate on that sound, or we can imagine ourselves playing a game or jumping In that case we concentrate on the muscular sense so as to distract the attention from hearing the objectionable sound

So, if the skin is irritated in one spot, we can get or imagine an irritation elsewhere, we might pinch ourselves, or we might imagine ourselves eating a delicious dish

Then, by degrees, we can learn to shut off any sense without diverting it, and without attending to any other sense-impression This sounds impossible at first, and it is not an exercise to begin with; it is an exercise to arrive at, and the way to arrive at it may be by the above means

City life is full of unpleasant sense-impressions, yet full of pleasant ones as well for those who have eyes to see, and ears to hear Into the body as through the gateways of a city, there come

through the senses all sorts of visitors We must learn to give no welcome to those that will injure us, and to select only those that will help us. Some people open the windows of their houses in all weathers, so that there enter not only the sunshine, but also the rain and fog The art is to open the windows to sunshine and fresh air, and to close them to rain and fog We need a patent mental device by which, wherever we are, we can let air and light into our rooms without rain and fog

XLIV

UNOBTRUSIVENESS

THE loud-voiced crank, conspicuous by his dress and his mad looks, is an abomination He works great harm to the cause which he exaggerates It is most important for anyone who desires to excel at concentration to be unobtrusive, his influence then will be far greater than if he openly seeks to convert everyone

The rule of "secrecy till success" is an excellent one And, even after success, one should, as a rule, wait until one is asked for advice My experience has been that unsolicited and even gratuitous advice is apt to be a mistake.

Fortunately in the practice of this art there is no excuse for obtrusiveness. Most of the exercises

are possible without anyone guessing that they are going on For example, it is quite easy to breathe in a thorough and leisurely way, to observe all sorts of things and imprint them on the memory and recall them afterwards, without being suspected of such excellent habits

In some cases, however, we must modify the full exercises. It would be ridiculous to relax completely in public—to let the body fall forward as if one were asleep or intoxicated It is, however, quite a simple thing to modify the full exercise, to relax the hands a little, to relax the eyes a little in a word, to be not absolutely relaxed, but less tense

The full exercise can be kept for times of solitude

XLV

WARNINGS AGAINST DANGERS

SOME dangers have already been pointed out in the section on "Faults and Fallacies." I will repeat a few of these here and add a few.

A great error, as I have just said, is made by those whose training is objectionable to others For example, the thorough mastication of all food is in theory admirable, but in practice it has the great disadvantage of annoying those who are with us, which is an unsocial plan, and those who neglect the social side of life are cranks of a bad

kind. Cranks of a worse kind are those who force their habits on others who are unready for them. A sense of humour will prevent such errors That is the great danger of concentration—that it tends to destroy the sense of humour

The concentrator is apt to be morbidly self-introspective He can guard against this if in his Self-suggestions or Assertions, for example, he gives a certain amount of time to wishing or willing good for others. Whereas the typical American mental-thought practiser gives almost her entire attention to herself, asserting all sorts of blessings for herself, the balanced thinker will assert these things for others equally. He may be self-centred; there is no harm in that He is not self-circumferenced

There is a still more serious danger—that is the danger of loss of control. Not a few who have entered into the Yoga system of training have become mentally unhinged, somewhat as many "spiritualists" have They have surrendered their contact with everyday life, and with it they have surrendered their common sense. There is little or no danger, however, if the individual has the guidance of a competent person at the start, and, as Mr Alfred J Faulding has pointed out, if he starts with and keeps to the right motive, the right motive being, not the selfish advancement of the individual, but the all-round good of the individual and of others as well.

The wrong motive is, in fact, the chief danger. There is need for incessant watchfulness lest, with

all our skill and advancement in concentration, we become more and more narrow, if not wicked. Some of the greatest examples of concentration in history have been some of the greatest curses to the human race. Napoleon's concentration, at least in the matter of war, was fatal to other countries besides France. Had he concentrated more on organisation of a peaceful kind, he would have left a name far less famous but far more clean and kind.

Having the right motive, one must next choose the right subjects. It is dangerous to rush prematurely, with full energy, regardless of the direction Even with an excellent motive, one may do great harm to oneself and to others—for instance, by misguided philanthropy Nine-tenths of the philanthropy of to-day seems to start with a right motive, but to work in a wrong direction and in a wrong way The worthy men have narrowed their range of vision, and have refused to see any results except the ideal results which they assume to be the actual and inevitable results of their philanthropy.

In a word, there is a danger of wrong perspective To go back to the subject of the opening section, there is a danger either that "first" things shall not be first, or else that "second" or "third" things shall be neglected altogether. We must steer towards "first" things by means of "second" and "third" things done well and sensibly

The way of preventing danger, then, is first to

get the right motive, then to be leisurely and reasonable, and not to be too grimly serious. If to the right motive and the sensible ways we add recreation and a living sense of humour, still more about ourselves than about others, we shall not go far from the path of safety

XLVI

CONCLUDING ADVICE

IT may be well to sum up briefly a few of the main points of this work, in the form of "Hints for the Hurried"

Study the ideal of life—that is to say, all-round success, and the ideal of concentration—that is to say, the plan of setting "first" things first, and keep them in view while one attends to "second", and "third" things in order of merit. Realise and remind yourself of the advantages of getting nearer to the ideal, and hence of the advantages of concentrating on the ideal, and hence of the advantages of the power of concentration generally; and hence of the advantages of the practice of concentration and practices for concentration

Begin early It is never too late to mend, it is never too late to prevent. It is also never too early to mend, never too early to prevent.

Start with the things ready to hand—for example, the positions of the body, the meals, the study of advertisements

Yet plan out carefully *what* you wish to study and *how* you wish to study Especially make up your mind to concentrate according to the "Part by Part" system, with repetition, etc , as suggested in previous sections. Use your own Pre-suggestions as a natural stimulus to concentration. A good one was offered on page 127

Progress gradually

Be sure to repeat the practices, and be regular, not necessarily by the clock, but by making use of constantly recurring opportunities

Be unobtrusive.

See the ridiculous side of yourself before others get the chance.

Use your own ways, and alter your ways from time to time by the light of experience. Do not have any rule of "foolish consistency." It is not the sign of a weak mind, but the sign of a strong mind to say that you were wrong, and then undo what you have done, or, at least, start doing the opposite

These hints, which take the unfortunate form of commands, are only put thus for the sake of convenience They, like all other words of mine in this book, are intended not to be commands but to be questions In each case I do not wish to say you must carry out this order to the very letter. I rather mean to ask whether such and such an idea is worth putting into practice If you decide that it is, try it fairly, judge it by its results, and give it up, or modify it, or continue it, accordingly.

XLVII—APPENDIX I

SAMPLE EXERCISES

IN one section I have already suggested several physical exercises, in other sections I have suggested mental exercises. Here I wish rather to offer lines for individual work of a more advanced kind. Realise that such work devised for you by yourself is worth far more to you than any work devised for you by me

Haddock's book is full of valuable ideas. Here is one of them—an exercise in the art of seeing real mental pictures

"Draw outlines of the models on paper, without shading. Now gaze steadily at any outline and try to fill out in the mind the solid contents of the model This requires steadiness of thought and coherence and vividness of imagination. It is therefore difficult, but can be accomplished by persistent effort. The strong Will gives the mind power to see solid mental pictures The endeavour so to see will develop the Will itself."

He might have added something about the importance of seeing coloured pictures, and I would alter the scheme altogether in one respect. I would start, not with stationary things, but with moving things. Do not picture a horse standing still, rather picture a horse running But work

out your own exercises, and, having worked them out, practise them

The practice requires a very steady mind, which will take some time to train. It is extremely hard to cut off the activity of the other senses A good plan will be to see things as if you were deaf and dumb, and had no power of taste or smell. So, also, when you are concentrating on sounds, it is a help to concentrate on them as if you were blind It is astonishing how keen is the sense of sound in blind people Make your ears serve for eyes as well Blind people actually see with their ears They identify people with their ears just as surely as we identify them with our eyes. As we say that a man is angry because he looks angry, they say that he is angry because he sounds angry. We see him clench his fist, they hear him do something similar with his voice

When you are listening to music, pick out one of the parts—for example, the bass part; or, in an orchestra, pick out some one instrument Shut your ears to all other instruments, concentrate on that one instrument alone. That is an advanced exercise in aural concentration.

In order to train the sense of touch, notice the textures of various things—wool, silk, cotton, etc. Feel these things and recall the particular sensation in memory immediately afterwards, and again some time afterwards.

In your physical exercises, start with simple movements. For instance, take the series of leg-

movements suggested in another book of mine Start with that leg-series alone, then start with the similar arm-series In the first, concentrate on the foot, send your sensations there, as it were In the second, concentrate on the arm, now on one part, now on another Then advance a step further and combine the movements, and keep your attention both on your foot and on your arm This is rather hard, but it can be done with practice A still more advanced exercise is to hold a dumb-bell in your hand—I have a special book of dumb-bell exercises which I will send to anyone who applies to me Hold this dumb-bell lightly, and divide your attention between your foot and your hand and the dumb-bell It may seem impossible at first that a man can send thought and almost sensation, as it were, into the dumb-bell, and yet it can be done.

Then grip the dumb-bell and attend to the grip and nothing else Afterwards divide your attention between the grip, the dumb-bell, and the foot.

As a different exercise, which resembles this one in its gradual progress, take an apple, touch it, and realise the touch of it Now tap it and stroke it and realise the sound it makes. Now study the size, colour, shape, shade, etc, next smell it; next taste it At first, practise with each sense separately, then combine the senses—two at a time, three at a time, and so on This is an extremely difficult exercise, and one that may take months to master.

Possibly none of the above exercises will suit you. It would be far better for you to note the general methods suggested here, and to work out your own exercises upon the objects and daily acts of your own life.

APPENDIX II

A SUGGESTION FOR TEACHERS

TEACHERS constantly tell learners to attend They scarcely ever tell learners how to attend To teach the art of attention and concentration is vitally important, and almost every master and mistress really wishes to know how to teach this valuable art

I should suggest that teachers taught their pupils the importance of Self-suggestion and Assertion For example, just as many lessons begin with a prayer, so many lessons can begin with a minute of silence, during which each learner can say to himself in his own words, "This one thing I am doing now with all my heart"

It is important to convince the learners that resolutions should give rise to actions along the line of them, and that these actions should follow the resolutions as soon as possible For instance, if the learner resolved to be more accurate and leisurely, he might then write down that resolution, not hurriedly, but accurately and leisurely,

forming the letters as perfectly as possible and as smoothly and easily as possible He might take a deep and full breath, which is good preparation for any brain-work or any physical work. The great thing is to let no resolutions stop as resolutions Let self-respect and self-confidence be developed, wherever this can be managed, by an immediate action along the line of the resolution

In the teaching of concentration itself, begin with the things which interest the learners. Among these, food is sure to be one, and the implements of play are sure to be others The learners could have a splendid lesson from a piece of bread, or an apple, or a cricket-ball There will be no difficulty in getting them to master the elements of concentration by the study of these familiar things Try to train all the senses in turn

Try to learn with the learners, do not be on a pedestal above them, but be a beginner with them This is the art of teaching

When you are in the position of the learner, look on things with his eyes You then see the importance of concentrating, not on the whole thing, but on the thing part by part, and progressing gradually on the "résumée" plan.

Do not hurry on from one study to another. The younger the learners are, the more they need rest Give them periods of silence, during which they can first digest the study just given, then [illegible] or stand at ease or perhaps stretch a little, then prepare for the next study.

Do not rush a subject upon them before you have given them time to think it out for themselves.

Give reasons so far as you can, and especially motives for concentration—motives that will move the learners, not abstract motives Convince the children that if they want to succeed they must concentrate in the right way

Invite questions. If a question is awkward, or beyond your power to answer, say you will think it over.

Remember that success in concentration is not simply to attend unswervingly, but to recall the mind to the matter in hand ever more quickly and more easily.

These hints may seem commonplace, but the plan I have suggested is one that is constantly neglected Almost everywhere in education, too much work of a dull kind is thrown upon all the learners indiscriminately I have not attempted here to take individuality into account. I have merely suggested a scheme for one of those large classes which are such a disgrace to our system of education. The ideal class should have very few in it; but I leave classes as they are and I leave the subjects as they are. I simply suggest that the teachers shall teach the present subjects in a rather different manner, and that they shall add at least one new subject, which is—the right way of concentration.

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